

**MASTER
MAN
HUNTERS**

JOSEPH GOLLOMB

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MASTER MAN HUNTERS

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By
JOSEPH GOLLOMB

Author of
"MASTER HIGHWAYMEN"
"PIRATES OLD AND NEW"

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WORLD OF
ARTS

Anon. 12.49 G

To
MY FATHER

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FOREWORD

SOME day a cold-blooded Izaak Walton will write a treatise on the "compleat art" of man-hunting. The tracking by society of the men who prey on man is already something of a sport and something of an art—in fiction. In real life it is a crusade, a science, a profession; there is no sporting ethics in it and the police prefer the shortest way to the kill whether it is good sport, art or none of these pleasant things.

But the quarry has grown clever with science and technique. Science plays no favorites and is at the disposal of any one who masters it. Poison serves the criminal as well as the physician. The oxy-acetylene torch will burn through steel as obligingly for the bank burglar as for the steel worker. The Great War, like all other wars, taught criminals new ways of killing. So that the whole fraternity of the underworld, from the petty thief who has learned enough to wear gloves when he does his looting to the murderer who uses only vegetable poisons which dissolve and leave no trace in the stomach, all these have taken on new tricks and are adding to them every day.

And the hunter has had to keep up with the quarry. The result is that so infinitely complex, delicate and manifold have become the means of weapons of crime as well as those of the hunting down of criminals with radio and X-ray, dictaphone, micro-photography, chemical reagents, psychoanalysis, organization technique, card cataloguing, international police conferences and ten thousand other devices, that the modern detective has come to exercise something of the care of the artist in choosing weapon and trail in his hunt.

But it is still primarily a hunt and each race has its own tracker's tricks. It is interesting to observe, in addition to the fascination of the tricks themselves, how even in hunting down men each race reveals its racial traits.

It is in four capitals of Europe that one can study best the art of man-hunting—London, Paris, Berlin and Vienna. Each has become world famous for its police. And it is to these centers that I devoted two years of study. The cream of the vast amount of material I thus gathered is presented in this book.

J. G.

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MASTER MAN HUNTERS

CHAPTER I

SCOTLAND YARD

EVERY schoolboy knows Scotland Yard from fiction. Which means that the schoolboy and all other lovers of fiction about that world-famous organization of criminal hunters have missed the better story. By a stroke of good fortune it has been my privilege as a writer to see from the inside the Scotland Yard of fact; to talk intimately with its chiefs; to study at close range its crime hunting machine and watch it work on actual cases; to look at photograph albums of famous crimes—a glimpse that haunted my sleep for nights; to spend hours in its gloomy "Black Museum"; to delve into its private records and borrow some of them for my work in writing these chapters. And the story of the real Scotland Yard needs no coloring to give it richer glamour than fiction does.

Let us put an actual case into the Scotland Yard machine and study its parts and workings by the way it spun a web of steel from the merest gossamers of clues. It began with a "bobby," best known, best loved policeman in the world, the bluecoat of London. He, too, is part of Scotland Yard, its uniformed arm.

This particular bobby patrolled a residential section of London, neither rich nor poor nor striking in any way. Which was the reason an elderly spinster, Mary Ennis, chose to live there. She had a reason for living in a colorless way in a colorless part of London, it developed later.

She had a small three-room flat in the upper story of a small brick house in a street full of small brick houses exactly like hers. The ground floor and basement she presumably tried to rent out; but the bobby who patrolled that street decided that she was difficult to please; for he observed that

while quite a number of people seemed ready to rent the place, she chose none of them.

She was apparently a recluse, for nobody called on her socially; and only a day servant and delivery boys ever set foot in the house. The bobby on the beat learned these things just as a woman, by everyday study of her face, learns when the first wrinkle arrives. He knew every house on his beat and the familiar aspect of its everyday fronts.

Early one morning when he came on his beat he noticed a slight difference in the aspect of Mary Ennis's house. From the window of the upper story where she lived fluttered the end of a curtain. It was not a startling thing to observe. But it had been raining and, putting this together with the fact that Miss Ennis never kept this window open even on clear nights, the bobby started thinking, which London bobbies do so often that their fame is not surprising. When later, therefore, he noticed that Miss Ennis did not take in her morning newspaper and bottle of milk, which it was her habit to take in exactly at half past eight every morning, he decided to ring her bell. No answer. She may have gone away for a trip, of course. But there was the curtain fluttering in the upper window.

The bobby then tried the front door, the basement door and the back door to her house. He noticed that she had an exceptional number of locks on her doors and very good ones, for all of them held well—except one. This was on the door leading to the basement in the rear.

The London bobby, like all British police, has a traditional respect for the sanctity of the home against invasion of any kind; and this bobby consulted his sergeant before entering Mary Ennis's house. When he and his sergeant did enter they found Mary Ennis strangled in her bed, a little wall safe of exceptional thickness burned open with oxy-acetylene torch, its contents looted and the front window open with the curtain blowing.

There was no telephone in the room, so the sergeant remained on the spot while the bobby sprinted to the nearest police box and called up "Scotland Yard," as the world knows it, "New Scotland Yard" as it is semiofficially known, and "C. I. D." or the "Criminal Investigation Department," which is its official name. With a brief but telling description the bobby outlined what he had seen and thereby gave C. I. D. an idea of what men and paraphernalia were to be hurried in a little green motor car to the house of Mary Ennis.

A quarter of an hour later there arrived in Mary Ennis's flat a divisional inspector, a finger-print man, a photographer and a specialist in a certain category of crime hunting. The four men busied themselves for several hours and found the following:

Persons unknown had skillfully picked the rear basement door lock; stolen up the stairs; scotched an up-to-date burglar alarm; strangled the lone occupant—not without a powerful struggle, however; burned out the safe door; opened the front window for some unknown reason; robbed the safe; stopped for a bite of refreshment in her little kitchen; and departed the same way they had come, leaving apparently little or nothing for the police to work on. This meant that the job was done by practiced hands wearing gloves.

The hunt for clues seemed barren at first. The finger-print man sprinkled his black, white and gray powders on every door knob, door edge, lintel, table, window frame, on walls and closet panels, everywhere a man was likely to rest his hand even for an instant.

He worked away with his delicate camel's hair brush, hoping at every effort that there would remain some fine lines of powder, which, delicate though they are, often hang careless criminals. There were finger-prints enough; but a glance at the finger tips of the mute victim told the Scotland Yard men the imprints were hers.

They did get, however, shreds of imprints that puzzled them. These were photographed and left for further study at the Yard. Photographs were also taken of the marks of a jimmy used on the basement lock. The method of forcing entrance into the house was carefully noted.

It would have puzzled an onlooker to see the eagerness with which the detectives studied, too, what the criminals ate from Miss Ennis's larder, in the meal they calmly made themselves after strangling her.

Then on the rug before the bed was found a bit of dried clay, such as would be left by the stamping of a muddy shoe.

This was not a rich haul for the Scotland Yard men; but they hurried back with it and set the machinery of C. I. D. to work on it. Their chemical experts analyzed the bit of dried clay to determine where the mud came from. It was not the mud of London's sidewalks, nor of the bit of garden through which the unknown criminals had passed to enter Miss Ennis's house.

From this it was deduced that the shoe from which the

bit of clay had dropped must have pressed hard into a bed of it somewhere outside of London, caught some of it in the angle the heel makes with the sole, where it had dried and then dropped off in the course of a struggle in Mary Ennis's room.

At once there was instituted one of those searches which to most people would seem the least interesting procedure in the world. Detectives were sent out to find parts of the country where the soil was of such a composition as chemical analysis showed the bit of dried clay to be. It would be a monotonous, uninspiring, dogged search, with not even the incentive of much reward to give it zest. For even complete success in this investigation might yield the slenderest of clews.

To an imaginative mind, however, the work of those minute creatures who build up coral islands, has a thrill of its own. And the search of Scotland Yard for the bed of mud whence that flake of clay had come, thrilled me perhaps more than the flash of lightning intuition of French detectives, which misses perhaps more often than it hits.

Such a tedious searching is one of the most characteristic procedures of Scotland Yard cases. With the patience, the bulldog tenacity, the racial talent for teamwork, and the special talent of Scotland Yard for such effort, these hunts have something of the inexorable quality of fate about them.

Meanwhile the victim herself was investigated. It was found that she was a wealthy but suspicion-ridden recluse, who had no faith in banks or brokers. She had converted all her wealth into jewels which she could keep in her little safe and turn them into cash as she needed it. To avert the attention of looters, she chose the colorless neighborhood in which she had lived, and lived alone.

To give her house the air of genteel impecuniousness, she put out a "Rooms to Rent" sign, but found excuse to keep them unrented. She had no relatives the police could find; no friends; and her business relations were confined to the few people who delivered her daily provisions. This line of investigation, therefore, yielded Scotland Yard nothing.

But there is a dark room in the great square, gloomy structure on the Embankment, where I studied Scotland Yard at work. Into this room there hurried several departmental chiefs with whatever clews had been found in Mary Ennis's room. These five men sat in the pitch dark, while an operator adjusted an apparatus at one end of it.

Suddenly there was the hiss of an electric current through an arc lamp and a vivid white screen was revealed on the wall. On this showed the intense shadows of the operator's fingers as he carefully placed some photographs on the stand of a reflecting apparatus.

Then appeared on the screen the vastly enlarged photographs, the shredlike imprints, the finger-print man had discovered with his powders and camel's hair brush. What were they?

Five experts in criminal hunting brought their combined intelligence to bear on the peculiar shreds of imprint now so huge on the screen. Finally their questing minds agreed on a solution. The men who had murdered Mary Ennis worked in street gloves. On the fingers of one glove there was a seam open, not big enough to attract the attention of the wearer, but enough open to have the pressure of the finger leave a shred of imprint wherever it rested hard.

Once this was decided the photographs were hurried off to the Finger-Print Bureau for piecing together and, if possible, identification. Fortunately the seam had shifted with the movement of the hand and the imprint left in several places was not always the same. It was in this same Finger-Print Bureau that the whole scheme of identification by finger-prints was first developed by Sir Edward Henry, a former head of Scotland Yard.

A quarter of a million finger-prints of criminals were assembled there when I saw it; the cards so cleverly arranged that given a finger-print, it took only five minutes to locate its counterpart among those two hundred and fifty thousand different records.

The shreds of imprint when pieced together gave part of a finger-print. But it was so small a part that absolutely individual as finger-prints are—no two individuals in the world give the same imprint—there was too little on which to base an unmistakable identification. The most the bureau could arrive at was to find seven different finger-prints of which the shreds might form a part.

In the dark room again the five experts studied now photographs of the marks made by the chisel or jimmy whereby the murderers forced entrance into Mary Ennis's house. From the archives of the Criminal Investigation Department were brought other photographs taken with a microscope camera lens of chisel marks discovered on other burglar cases. One by one these were compared with the newcomers.

Chisel edges show as individually ragged under a microscope as the bite of human teeth and can be as significant as finger-prints. But unlike the dents of teeth and the imprints of fingers, the bite of a chisel may change its mark if the chisel meets hard substance. So that here again the council in the dark room could arrive only at an approximate identification.

Meanwhile in another part of Scotland Yard, under the supervision of a kindly, student type of man, Inspector John Hendry, who was most kind in lending me records, another line of investigation was being carried on. Inspector Hendry has organized a most interesting system of classification.

One thousand and more different kinds of crime are here catalogued in classes, from A to Z, subdivided according to the technique employed—arson, burglary, counterfeiting, murder, theft and so on down the alphabet of crime. Under burglary, for instance, there are further subdivisions—armed, bank, cutting bell wires, rear of building entries, killing dogs, wears gloves, wears mask, expert in burglar alarms and so on and so forth.

For those of the underworld are as much creatures of habit and specialization as the rest of the world. Here, too, are registered on the records of past crimes any peculiarities discovered in connection with such crimes. The fact, for instance, that a burglar will help himself to food in a house he is looting is a fact so familiar to police that in Inspector Hendry's remarkable catalogue one finds even notes of the particular foods that have appealed to different burglars.

Also the hours of the burglary are carefully recorded. There are daylight burglars and evening burglars who work between the dinner hour and the hour of return from the theater; and there are the burglars who work in the dead of night.

In this office, too, are classifications of criminals along every striking line of description; men over six feet tall; men with red hair; women who wear widow's weeds; stutterers; left-handed men.

Inspector Hendry, therefore, studied the description of how the murderers broke into Mary Ennis's house; how they had killed her; how they opened the safe; and what they had eaten in her kitchen. No wonder the face of the Scotland Yard man had lit up when he found that two pots of Mary Ennis's jam were consumed. For in Inspector Hendry's records there were a number of burglars who were fond of gooseberry jam.

From the study of the Ennis murderers' method of entry and work, Inspector Hendry proceeded to study other records in his catalogue. Twelve cards were then taken out of their cases and the records on each noted down for comparison.

Meanwhile from the Finger-Print Bureau had come their seven cards as contribution to possible identifications. Other reports, too, were drifting in from the patiently plodding searchers for the place of origin of the bit of dried mud found in Mary Ennis's room.

From the comparison of the cards bearing possible identities that would match the clues in the Ennis case there resulted a narrowing down of the search. Seven men had records into which might fit the fragments of descriptions.

Then followed another sifting. Of these seven, one was dead. One was in Pentonville Prison at that very moment. One was on parole and his record showed that he was undoubtedly turning over a new leaf. Four remained still possible factors.

One of these four had a sweetheart living near Dorking, as the record showed. Among the places reported as showing a clay composition like that of the bit found on the scene of the murder, Dorking was one. Therefore Jim Sully, alias "Red" Sully, alias several other names, whose finger-prints *might* contain the fragment of finger-print found in the Ennis murder; whose method of dead-of-night burglary was recorded in Scotland Yard as similar to the entry in question; whose fondness for food, especially jam, while at his predatory work was already noted in Inspector Hendry's catalogue; the marks of whose chisel on previous jobs resembled those in the Ennis case—in short, Jim Sully, whose whereabouts were unknown, but who had a sweetheart in Dorking, was now studied from the photographs in the rogue's gallery of Scotland Yard.

"He's elected!" the council decided.

Immediately wheels of other parts of the Scotland Yard machine began to whirl. At a peculiar looking keyboard a telegraph operator began tapping a key marked "A. S."—meaning "all stations."

In the various police stations throughout London and suburbs a corresponding ticker-like machine began to click out on a paper tape a typewritten description of Jim Sully, his appearance, his records, his characteristics, some of his habits, the kind of clothes he usually wore, his associates, the

places he frequented and other information about him. In half an hour over twenty thousand bobbies and other policemen in civilian clothes had his description fresh in mind and the hunt spread wide.

In another part of Scotland Yard, wholly unlike any picture usually connected with a police institution, a miniature newspaper office was at work. Here are published two daily newspapers, one morning, one afternoon, the latter with several editions every day, one bi-weekly, one weekly, and several that are issued as occasion demands.

None of these are for the general public and none for sale. *The Morning Report* is the morning daily, *Printed Information*, the afternoon paper. Both are illustrated with photographs and carry the latest news under the following captions: "Wanted for Crime," "In Custody for Crime," "Property Stolen," "Persons or Bodies Found," "Persons Missing," and "Animals Lost or Stolen."

Every Tuesday and Friday there is published, too, in that Scotland Yard newspaper office, the famous *Police Gazette*, which is sent to the police chiefs of every city in the British Empire and to many others. It is, like the others, a modest four-page affair well illustrated with photographs and has correspondents all over the world. On Tuesdays it lays stress on deserters from the army and the navy; on Fridays it devotes itself exclusively to crime and criminals.

Still another of this string of periodicals is *The Illustrated Circular*, devoted to the movements of wandering crooks. A certain gentleman who specializes in breaking into warehouses leaves Liverpool for Bradford. The correspondent from Liverpool, its chief of police, whose interest in this gentleman's movements is considerable, finds the story important enough to telegraph it to *The Illustrated Circular*.

When the Bradford subscriber to this periodical reads this item, he, too, is interested, even though the article in question is brief: "Henry Bolks, alias the Cardiff Kid, alias Punkey, has left Liverpool for Bradford. Breaks into warehouses."

Still other periodicals emanating from this unique newspaper office are *The Weekly List of Habitual Criminals*, devoted to names and descriptions of that gentry just released from prison; *The Black List*, issued for saloonkeepers and containing names and photographs of those habitual drunkards to whom it is forbidden to sell liquor; *The Pawnbrokers*

List and *The Cycle List*, circulated among those likely to give information on stolen goods.

The detailed description, an excellent photograph, full face and profile of Jim Sully, therefore, appeared as the leading story in several of the above newspapers. Bundles of these were thrown into small, closed green motor cars and hustled to all police stations. Others were mailed throughout the United Kingdom. Thereafter police had an actual photograph to help them in keeping an interested eye open.

Meanwhile in Dorking a sharp-eyed young woman, who seemed to live quietly but in exceptional comfort, without working, kept her keen eyes and wits about her. Wherever she went she made it her practice to look into shop windows. Now that is not a remarkable practice for young women.

What was remarkable, however, did not meet the eye. For this young woman's gaze, while seemingly and naturally staring toward whatever mirrors the shop windows contained, was rarely concentrated on the image of her pretty self. No one could possibly tell that instead of admiring herself she was on the lookout in those mirrors for the faces of others.

Kitty Pearce knew something about being shadowed by the police; and still more about how to spy in turn on her shadows. Just now she had particular reason for being on guard; less on her own account than another's. But keen as were her eyes and wits, and often as she stopped to look at the mirrors in shop windows, as well as in the pale reflections in windowpanes when there were no mirrors, she saw no face that she remembered seeing often enough to arouse her suspicion.

Nevertheless Scotland Yard was on her trail; and if a bright intelligence like hers did not recognize the fact, it was due to Scotland Yard's system of shadowing. Detective A was the first to follow Kitty Pearce. Behind him trailed Detective B. Behind the latter followed Detective C.

Only A, however, kept his eyes on Kitty. But when he saw her keen interest in shop windows, he was not deceived. So before his face should become familiar he gave a secret sign and dropped out of sight. At once Detective B hurried forward and took his place. He, too, knew the real reason why Miss Kitty preened herself so often in shop windows.

So that he stayed only a short while on her trail and soon gave the secret sign to Detective C and in turn dropped out

of sight. In this way none of the Scotland Yard men appeared often enough within range of Kitty's eyes to arouse even her alert suspicion.

But Kitty Pearce did not trust to the evidence of her eyes, keen though they were. Much as she desired to see her sweetheart, Jim Sully, both he and she found it wise for weighty reasons to avoid meeting at this time.

So that the Scotland Yard shadowers got little out of their assiduous following of Kitty. This, however, did not mean that she and her lover were out of touch with each other. Both were experienced in the art of communication in spite of police surveillance.

Not more fruitful were similar stealthy doggings of several other men and women, marked on Scotland Yard records as friends and associates of Jim Sully. Instead of feeling that luck was against them, however, Scotland Yard took these failures as part of their average percentage of success.

It is only in fiction that the detective lands fish on his line at the first or second cast. Shall we say, therefore, that fictional success is more thrilling to contemplate than the success that comes with dogged, relentless effort in the face of repeated failure?

Finally Scotland Yard chiefs decided that if they could not catch up with Jim Sully it might be worth trying to get Jim Sully to come to them. Into the council room at the Yard one morning there were summoned half a dozen detectives, chosen for their phlegmatic appearance.

A sort of amateur theatrical performance was then staged. Each of the six were given the same part to play—that of a Dutchman, interested in picking up bargains in jewels and no questions asked. He was told that he was in the company of gentry among whom there were possibilities of trade, and was asked to act accordingly.

Of these six one was chosen as best in the rôle. From the council room this operator went to the make-up room of Scotland Yard. The days when detectives used false beards and mustaches have passed even in cheapest detective fiction. But that does not mean that disguises are not employed in Scotland Yard. Indeed never before have disguises and the assuming of rôles been so widely and effectively used as to-day in Scotland Yard work. But the disguises are those of character rather than of face.

In the make-up room one finds none of the paraphernalia of the dressing room of the theater, no wigs, paints, costumes

or "props" in the stage meaning of the word. But one does find there a remarkable collection of photographs.

They are of bricklayers and bookmakers, of plumbers and ministers, of Salvation Army soldiers and of receivers of stolen goods; of cheap stock company actors, undertakers, beggars, perfumed gentlemen of leisure and the dance, of barkeepers, doctors, electricians, truck drivers, newspaper dealers, peddlers and hundreds of other types that make up the myriad swarm in everyday London.

From this collection the prospective detective-actor selects photographs of several originals of the rôle he is to assume. Our man picked to play the Dutch receiver of stolen jewels found half a dozen photographs to study. He carefully noted the characteristic clothing of the type; the cut of the hair; the presence or absence of ornament.

Finally Detective—let us call him X—felt that he knew what he wanted next. At a tailor's he had a suit made after certain minute description. At the conclusion of some telephoning between Scotland Yard chiefs and a leading London jeweler Detective X, now clad in the loud garb of a Dutchman in more than flourishing circumstances, issued from the swagger jewelry shop with a blazing diamond ring on one finger, several emeralds on another, a great gold watch chain and resplendent watch and charm, a huge black pearl in his cravat and a diamond stud in his shirt bosom.

In the office of Frederick Thomas, superintendent of the Central Office of Scotland Yard, I saw a big iron safe and when its doors swung open, I caught a glimpse of considerable sums of gold and money.

When a detective goes out on a bit of hunting that may require money those doors swing open and without any further red tape as large a sum is handed over to the detective for emergency use as he may need—and more added for good measure. Detective X was now given a roll of Bank of England notes big enough to cause palpitation of the heart to most people.

Then Detective X, resplendent in garb and jewelry, went to a flashy sporting hotel and engaged a resplendent suite of rooms for himself under the name of "Hendrick Oomstadt, Amsterdam and New York." That evening he sallied forth to several cafés and dancing resorts where the upper and underworlds touch boundaries.

After a bit of solitary drinking—for each round he paid showily out of his elephantine roll of bills—he became ex-

ceedingly hospitable and invited several favored individuals to drink with him. These individuals responded less with alacrity than with caution. They seemed more interested in the man than in his hospitality.

Suddenly the apparently drunken Dutchman made a lightning move with his right hand toward his pocket and caught a hand in it that did not belong there, a light-fingered hand belonging to a slim young man. There was instantaneous scuffle and the Dutchman's other guests rose and surrounded him. But his other hand was rammed deep in his pocket and that pocket bulged significantly. The bulge had a circular tip to it.

"Yust you fellows keep away from my money!" the Dutchman growled. "I don't want the pohless, not py a tamn, but I don't want no trouble from you neither. If you want my money, you got to gif me something I want for it, see?"

Whether it was due to the weapon in his pocket or to his words about not wanting the police, the effect on the others was instantaneous. Their hostility relaxed; and their interest in the man changed. Immediately after the Dutchman released the pickpocket and told him to buy himself a drink with a bill he tossed to him, the atmosphere in the group that remained became almost friendly. And the voices of all dropped to that of confidential exchange.

"Just what is it you want for your money, Dutchy?" asked a keen-eyed man.

The film of drink left the Dutchman's eyes.

"Vell, I like to wear lots und lots of chewelry, as you can see," he said, looking the other straight and significantly in the eyes. "Und so long as the chewelry is goot and handsome I pays goot prices und asks no questions. See?"

The other "saw." He took off a ring of modest value and handed it over. "How about this?" he asked the Dutchman.

The other's face expressed deep disgust. "I said 'chewelry,' not drinkets! If you got something wort' while botherin' with, call on me at the Sporting Arms Inn."

Two days later the keen-eyed young fellow called on the Dutchman at the hotel and offered for sale a ring, this time of more impressive value. It was honestly bought of a respectable jeweler, though not necessarily with honestly acquired money.

But the Dutchman was being tested. He drove a knowing bargain, paying less for it than the keen-eyed man had paid

for it. But the latter seemed satisfied, as it was a good price for a "fence" or receiver of stolen goods to pay.

For two weeks the Dutchman was shadowed by various gentry. Then as his movements seemed to be satisfactory to prospective customers, there came to him one day by way of the keen-eyed man, several pieces of jewelry for sale, of rather considerable value. The look of phlegm on the Dutchman's face was a bit of art; for he recognized the jewels from a description he had been carrying about with him.

"Pretty goot!" the Dutchman said. "But I'm leafing soon und I am keeping my money for some big deal or another. I'm after some goot *collection* and I don't want to divide my money in several leedle bits."

The other pondered a while. "I think I can put you next to something good—if you're going far from England after you buy it," he said. "A friend of mine has it."

"Well, I haf to haf it pretty quick as I leave day after to-morrow. Better bring your friend here, so we don't lose time."

The other's eyes narrowed slightly. "No, I will bring it myself."

The Dutchman shrugged his shoulders. "Makes no difference who brings it, so long as I see it before I sail for Australia day after to-morrow."

The other man returned that afternoon with an impressive collection of jewelry. In the privacy of the Dutchman's room—with the windows heavily curtained—the Dutchman after a long examination offered a price too good to turn down without discussion, but too low to accept without a consultation with the "owner" of the jewels. And with true Dutch obstinacy he held to his offer. The other debated with himself for a while. Then going to window, he raised the shade and lowered it twice.

Five minutes later there was a knock on the door and a heavy-shouldered man entered in reply to the "Come in!" His quick green eyes darted about the room, noting each door and closet. He was introduced to the Dutchman as "Mr. Smith." The Dutchman and Mr. Smith then entered into some close and expert bargaining.

Suddenly, without a knock a young fellow burst into the room. Mr. Smith and his friend, the keen-eyed man, sprang to their feet and clapped their hands on their hip pockets. But the newcomer paid no attention to them.

"Mr. Oomstadt, Mr. Oomstadt!" he gasped. "There's a lot

of men coming up the stairs to get you and I'm afraid they're going to search you!"

Mr. Oomstadt leaped up, his face working with alarm. "How many?" he gasped. "Are they armed, Hans?"

"Four, and I think they are!"

Mr. Oomstadt seemed to have forgotten his visitors. Down the corridors came the sound of heavy feet.

"They mustn't find anything on me!" Oomstadt gasped, thrusting the jewels back into Smith's hands.

Smith seemed equally anxious. "Nor on me, by cripes!" he growled. "Nor my gun, nor yours, Jerry!"

With lightning speed he thrust the jewels and the two revolvers, his own and Jerry's, into a large brass cuspidor and replaced the cover. But he remained near it.

After an imperious knock, five serious, powerful men entered. A look flashed between Oomstadt and their leader.

"Jim Sully, you're under ar—" the leader began.

Like the strike of a snake Jim Sully shot his hand to the cuspidor to reach for his revolver. But Oomstadt knocked him to the floor and a moment later two men had pinned Jim Sully and his friend and had them handcuffed.

Two months later the two were expiating their murder of Mary Ennis.

You will not find this case recorded in Scotland Yard as one of remarkable achievement; it is much nearer in type to the sort of thing that is usual grist to the Scotland Yard machine. Which is the reason I chose it rather than many others I know, that read like fiction but are not. "A good wine needs no bush," runs an old English saying. And the Scotland Yard machine needs no exceptional tricking out to justify its fame.

CHAPTER II

TRAINING THE MAN HUNTER

SUPPOSE yourself taking a walk alone toward midnight on a quiet street in London. Being thus in the most populous city in the world you run a certain risk of being held up and robbed. Now take a similar walk in New York, whose population is slightly less than that of London. Are you safer in New York under the same circumstances; or in greater danger? Figures are usually dull affairs, but sometimes they can be as vivid as melodrama.

Here are some figures compiled by such sober agencies as the American Bankers' Association that should arouse at least a gleam of interest. The man who takes a walk alone in New York runs just thirty-six times more risk of being held up and robbed than if he took the same walk in London. And if it is Chicago that he chooses for his lonely stroll his chances of being robbed are—not figuratively but literally—one hundred times greater than in the city which is protected by Scotland Yard.

Or consider burglary and what happens to the burglar in New York and in London. According to undisputed figures a burglar in New York has thirteen chances to one in his favor that he will escape punishment for his crime. Whereas in London the chances are ten to one *against* him that he will be caught by Scotland Yard. Again, last year there were two hundred and sixty-two murders committed in New York, the majority of them going unpunished. But only twenty-seven murders were committed during the same period in London, all but two of them being traced and brought to trial by Scotland Yard.

Of course this vast difference in crime and punishment is not wholly due to Scotland Yard. Ours is a more mixed, more turbulent population. And the American gunman will more readily "match with destiny for beers" than the London criminal. But it is a fair assumption this is largely because the London crook knows that against him in the play of hazards will be a Scotland Yard man, with the world-famous criminal hunting organization behind him.

In the chapter before this I have described the Scotland Yard machine. Let us take advantage now of the glimpse that has been generously allowed me into the inner workings of Scotland Yard and look on at the making of one of its detectives, one of the men who render it one hundred and thirty times more dangerous for a crook to operate in London than in New York.

I use the name of John Waller, and though the name is not real, I have in mind a definite member of the Scotland Yard organization, a detective neither more clever nor more lucky than his fellows—a man whose career is typical. I asked Superintendent Fred Thomas, chief of the Central Office of Scotland Yard, to help me present to you the evolution of John Waller, detective.

"Where did you first get him?" I asked Superintendent Thomas.

"We got him where we get most of our men—from the farmer's plow," he said with a quiet gleam of amusement at my surprise. "We want our raw material raw, green. As green as possible. So we go to the farm for it."

"Why not get it in London?" I asked.

"For several reasons. One is that we don't want a policeman, whether in uniform or later as a detective, to have family or other bonds in the districts where he is sent to work. It lessens the chances of embarrassing complications for him when he is sent out to make an arrest. We don't want to put him to the possible ordeal of having some day to choose between love and duty.

"Another reason we prefer the green plow boy to the smart city product is that the latter usually 'knows' too much; has too many fixed notions about the city, about how a policeman's work should be done; and about other things. We have our own ideas about these things; and would have to spend time and effort to disabuse the city product of his preconceptions and to get him to accept ours. Whereas the country boy brings a fresh mind to the city and is more teachable.

"The Metropolitan Police sends scouting squads into the farming sections of our country to recruit our raw material," Superintendent Thomas continued. The Metropolitan Police is the official name for the London "bobby's" organization just as Criminal Investigation Department is the official name for Scotland Yard. "These squads consist of a physician and several trained investigators. When one of these squads come to a village they let it be known that opportunity has arrived

for several good lads from the plow to become part of our organization. Usually we have no lack of applicants, for the pay is good and the career offers plenty of room for advancement for good men.

"It was in this way that we got John Waller in a small town in Yorkshire. He came to our squad from his father's plow. It seems that instead of keeping his mind and eye on the furrow where wheat was to grow, his thoughts kept straying to the great metropolis. Son of a thousand years of farmer stock though he was, it was the world of men that filled his imagination. So he got his father's permission and applied to our squad as a recruit.

"Our physician examined him thoroughly, and found him a splendid specimen, sound in every fiber, strong as good farming breed can make a man. Meanwhile our investigators had gone into his personal history and found him as clean morally as he was rugged in body. So John was signed up and brought to London, where he was sent to the police school for several weeks."

I was permitted to look on at what some of John Waller's successors were being taught at that school. It was a more varied course than any I had ever experienced. The pupils were taught to read and remember the automobile number on a plate that was whisked away almost as soon as it was shown; how to administer first aid to the injured; how to meet attack from the rear; how to extemporize a lock on a door that had been jimmied; how to keep a fire from gaining headway; how to shoot—although neither bobbies nor even Scotland Yard detectives are allowed to carry firearms without special permission; how to direct strangers who don't know the city; how to detect strangers who are too familiar with the city, too much so for the comfort of good citizens. In short, John Waller got an all-round bobby's education in that school. Then he was put into a uniform and sent out on patrol.

"Kipling once wrote," said Superintendent Thomas, "that let a man stand long enough at any one of a number of places he mentioned—of which Charing Cross station in London was one—and sooner or later there would pass before him every man or woman on earth. Whether true or not, there is no denying that the endless procession in London streets, where John Waller patrolled, presents perhaps the most varied stream of humanity of any city on earth. Now our police have their work to do; especially those who direct traffic. The

latter, of course, have little opportunity to study human nature even though it flows past him so richly.

“But the others, like John Waller in his bobby days, if they are at all intelligent, consciously or unconsciously learn much from this endless show. And we hadn’t selected John Waller for his dullness. As he showed himself interested, intelligent, and teachable, he was occasionally given patrol duty to do in plain clothes. That did not make him a detective, only a patrolman in ‘civies.’ But we watched his work carefully, and when we decided that he had the makings of a detective in him, we took him off the patrolman’s beat and put him into the detective school in Scotland Yard for a course.”

Superintendent Thomas and others have shown me that school in operation, and I wonder if the most inveterate school-boy truant—provided his nerves were strong enough to stand some of these studies—would want to dodge a single day of this school. It is impossible to dwell here on more than just a few things John Waller was taught here. He learned how to tell at a glance the work of a porch-climber from that of a second-story man; how to look for clues in finger-prints, hairs; in a bit of shoe lace, a flake of mud, the course of a bullet; in the shape of a blood stain, powder burns, the kind of cracks made in a window pane, and in any of a thousand and one other significant trifles.

He was taken to the “Black Museum,” that gloomy chamber filled with remarkable relics of crime; and the crimes themselves were depicted and analyzed. He was given the photograph scrap books of Superintendent Thomas to study, full of the camera’s minute and detailed representation of many famous murders and other crimes—and a half hour’s glimpse into those books gave me many a nightmare-ridden night.

John Waller sat like a big schoolboy on a stool while gunshot specialists showed him how to judge powder burns; while specialists in poisons analyzed the effects of these for him; while specialists in physiognomy, psychology, and criminal pathology, taught him something about the human animal from chart, photograph, and living subject.

“Finally, when John Waller’s classroom course was finished,” Superintendent Thomas went on, “he was sent out as probationer detective on humble errands. He was given a round of pawnshops to search for stolen articles. He was used as a sort of errand boy by older, more experienced detectives at work on important cases. He was put on the trail of unimportant suspects to dog their steps. He was given a

bit of cloth and had to visit every clothing store in half London to find where the suit was bought from which the piece was torn.

"John acquitted himself well in the patient drudging phases of detective work—and nine times out of ten it is the kind of work we have to do in Scotland Yard. We found that he was willing to drudge and trudge to run down the slightest clew. Then we had him play second fiddle to one of our best men. The report came back that John was equal to his growing responsibilities.

"Finally he got a case of his own to handle. Of course that meant that he could count on the resources in men, means, and machinery of all Scotland Yard. Now it happened that John won his spurs in that case. But I am telling you of that case because I think it shows how John's origin, his training, and the character of the organization behind him all played a part in the mystery he was given to clear up.

"First, however, I want to emphasize one aspect of John's detective training which he had to get outside of Scotland Yard. He was made to mingle with people in all walks of life. The object was not primarily for him to spy; though of course our men don't go out of their way to advertise their calling. But neither do they lie about it if they can avoid it. Their purpose is the same as that of most newspapermen, to know as many people as possible, so that when occasion arises, their resources for getting information may be ample.

"Now it happened that about the time John Waller was ripe for a full-grown case of his own, there broke out a series of fires that mystified our fire department. There were six in all, two of them with fatalities, in one case a physician, in the other an importer of drugs. The fire investigators decided that they were all incendiary in character, and all bearing signs of the same handiwork.

"They naturally looked to see if some one was benefiting by the fire insurance, and found that while in each case there was insurance, no one person benefited by any two of the fires. Also the two fatalities pointed away from this conclusion as the tragic victims themselves would have been the beneficiaries of the insurance.

"John Waller was sent out to investigate these cases, and given all the men and equipment he wanted. He took with him two good assistants and a photographer; a specialist in arson; and one of our consulting pathologists, who has made

a special study of pyromaniacs, as those degenerates are called who set fire to buildings for the perverted joy it gives them. He also took along a finger-print man, but sent him back as soon as he saw how completely the fire in each case had gutted the room in which it was started.

"The arson specialist pointed out certain characteristics in the way each fire was apparently started. The pathologist studied these and suggested a hypothetical character for the unknown criminal. The photographer took pictures of the fires under Waller's instructions. Later, back in the Criminal Registry Office, these photographs were compared with others of similar crimes on file in the records. Then gathering what few leads he got from these various sources, John Waller sat down to construct a working hypothesis.

"He ventured on the guess—though it was more solidly founded than a mere guess—that the criminal behind all these fires was not a clear-cut type, actuated by some one dominant passion; but was probably impelled by several different motives in his crimes. From the completeness with which the fire had gutted the rooms in each case, Waller deduced that one of these motives was perhaps the obliteration of clues to crimes the pyromaniac had committed just before setting fire to each place. In support of this was the fact that in each case valuables were missing, though whether the fire had destroyed them or they had been stolen, it was almost impossible to tell.

"That there were also signs of a pyromaniac operating here was found by the pathologist. That the criminal was probably one of those dangerous persons bordering on homicidal insanity yet extremely intelligent in all that kept him from being punished for his crimes, was also part of Waller's hypothesis. For if robbery was one of the motives none of the stakes were large enough to tempt a sane man to go to the lengths of crime these cases revealed.

"Waller then went to our Inspector Hendry, who keeps the remarkable catalogue in Scotland Yard wherein scores of thousands of criminals are classified according to the technique of their crimes, their personal appearance, their psychological characteristics, and along other lines of identification. But no amount of search among pyromaniac records helped in this case.

"Then, in the course of running down all sorts of information which would appear useless to most laymen, Waller discovered that in each case the fire insurance policy was with

the same company. From this he further discovered that the same insurance agent had visited all these people either to insure or to collect premiums.

"Waller had one of his assistants quietly investigate the agent, a pleasure-loving young man by the name of Parks. He was a bachelor, went out evenings a great deal, and drank more than was good for him, for his employers had warned him that he would be discharged if he did not stop drinking. Waller's assistant also informed his superior in this case that the young man had seemed of late greatly worried over something.

"Waller went to the restaurant where this young man used to drop in for a cup of coffee and a sandwich just before going to bed. After observing him from a neighboring table for some time, Waller had the young man summoned to Scotland Yard.

"The man arrived outwardly frightened, but with a certain desperation about him.

"'I want to know why I am hauled here as if I had done something criminal!' he demanded. 'If you're going to arrest me for something, tell me what it is. But you'll get nothing out of me, because even if you do charge me with anything, you are bound to warn me not to speak except before a judge and jury!'

"Now, Waller's country honesty and sincerity had never left the man. Combined with it was now a rich knowledge of human nature under the stress of emotion. So that when he spoke kindly, if gravely, to the young fellow, the latter believed him.

"'I asked you to come here, as a favor to me, and also as a chance for you to help us solve the mystery behind the Chelsea fires,' Waller told him. 'You see, the only thing we found in common in these fires is that you had visited all these people—as insurance agent. You must believe me when I say I don't suspect you of anything grave in connection with this business. Only you yourself feel uneasy about this. You have been worried of late. You protest your rights so vehemently. You turned white when I mentioned these fires. Now, I've seen enough of you to feel there is nothing for you to fear in this case. But I do want to know what has troubled you about it.'"

Superintendent Thomas stopped to point out that had Waller been a smart city product he would perhaps have jumped to the conclusion of guilt on the part of Parks and made things

vastly harder both for himself and Parks. As it was the young fellow eagerly told all he knew.

"You see, Mr. Waller, when I read of the fire at Mr. Harkness's, I said to my self, "Hello! That's one of my customers!" Three days later came another. I thought it was only a coincidence. Then came the third, with poor Dr. Wells burned alive. Another customer, I told myself. What does it mean? Then came a fourth and a fifth and a sixth! I nearly went mad trying to think if it had anything to do with me. I've got all I can do to fight liquor as it is.

"With this worrying me I simply *had* to drink to keep my mind from hatching all sorts of ideas. And of course I wasn't telling anybody about the business. Any moment I expected the company would realize that it was I who had insured all these "risks" and have me up on the carpet. And what could I say? It looked all so queer. And yet, before God, Mr. Waller, I have no more to do with these fires than you!"

"Waller believed him," Superintendent Thomas went on. "But his mind was busy.

"Don't you keep a list of all those you insured?" he asked Parks.

"Yes, I do!" Parks said. "Here it is!" And he took out a wallet, and from it a paper with a list of names and addresses on it, and other information."

Superintendent Thomas told me Waller looked at both paper and wallet and did some more thinking.

"Did you lend this to any one?" he asked Parks.

"No, indeed!"

"Did you forget it anywhere?"

"Parks thought a moment. 'No. I lost the wallet or forgot it in the Manchester Bar one night about a month ago. But I got it back next day. Somebody had found it and turned it in to the bartender.'

"Anything missing?" asked Waller.

"Not a penny and I had about twelve pounds in bills in it. They're an honest crowd at the Manchester Bar.'

"Are they?" Waller asked.

"You see, Waller knew that bar," Superintendent Thomas commented. "He knew the character of the crowd there from some of that mixing with all sorts of people in all sorts of places, about which I spoke to you as part of Waller's training. And he knew that the Manchester Bar was a resort for riff-raff, petty thieves, and sometimes big ones, drug addicts

and their friends. The fact that a wallet could be picked up—assuming it was ‘lost’ in the bar—and returned untouched aroused Waller’s interest.”

To the layman the incident would have seemed an insignificant trifle even had he known the character of Manchester Bar frequenters. But Waller was not a layman.

“Were you a bit—plattered that night?” he asked Parks.

“Parks blushed. ‘Yes, I was.’

“‘Met some stranger or other?’ Waller pursued.

“Parks racked his memory. ‘Why, yes, I did. A little chap. Not very impressive. But I was feeling lonely and worried and anybody for company was better than nobody. He stood me drinks. Then I stood him. He must have taken me home because the first thing I remember I was waking up in bed with a thundering headache. Then I found I’d lost my wallet and went back to the Manchester Bar. The bartender held it out. ‘Hope everything’s there,’ he said. ‘Because the chap who found it has sticky fingers.’”

“Waller had one of his assistants take Parks to the Manchester Bar. On Waller’s instructions Parks raised a complaint to the barkeeper that there had been something taken after all—an important paper.

“‘Well, you’ve been a long time finding it out,’ the bartender retorted. ‘Balmy George hasn’t been here since he handed me that wallet.’

“‘Balmy George,’ proved on inquiry and referring to our Criminal Registry Office, to be George Willkers, a pickpocket and drug addict, with a recorded technique of operating on strangers whom he had rendered too mellow with treating to drinks for them to note his clever finger work in their pockets. John Waller at once sent out a ‘still alarm’ for the man.

“It went out over scores of simultaneous tickers operating in all stations and worked by a single operator at a machine in Scotland Yard. In half an hour the police all over London had a description of Willkers and twenty thousand and more bobbies and detectives were looking for him. Then two of the secret newspapers published in Scotland Yard printed photographs, finger-prints and records of the man—all from our Criminal Registry Office—and the papers were shot out to all police stations and to the police of neighboring cities. As a result George Willkers was brought into Scotland Yard and taken before John Waller in less than forty-eight hours after the alarm had gone out.

"The pasty-faced little pickpocket was ashen-gray with fright.

"'Wot 'ave I done, guvnor?'" he whined.

"Waller studied him for some moments. Then he said kindly.

"'You tell me that, George,'" he said. 'I know enough to make me curious but not enough to give you anything to worry about—unless you are foolish enough to pretend you know nothing about this—!'

"He held up Parks's wallet.

"'Why, I found it and turned it in and if there's anything missing it's the barkeep's fault!'" Willkers protested. But his eyes did not fool Waller much.

"'There's nothing missing, my boy,'" Waller said. 'But you didn't find it. Now there's too serious a business connected with this for you to get any deeper into it than you have. If we get a little information from you we will forget a little sleight-of-hand work on your part in getting this wallet. Because I feel sure you didn't have much more to do with this than just to borrow Parks' wallet with the papers in it. Think a bit, George, then tell me something.'

"George thought a bit then told all he knew. It appears that one night a stranger sat down beside him and after inviting him to drink pointed out Parks at a neighboring table.

"'That man is a business rival of mine,'" he told Willkers. 'He's got information in a wallet in his inside pocket which is worth twenty pounds to me. Borrow that wallet for me for an hour—without letting that man know it—and I will give it back to you just as you found it. And that twenty pounds is yours. Also if there is money or other valuables in that wallet you are not to touch it. But I will make up to you anything you lose by returning the wallet untouched.'

"Willkers saw no reason for turning the chance away so he cultivated Parks; got him drunk; pretended to help him to his feet; slipped his hand into his inside pocket, abstracted the wallet and after taking Parks home, returned to the Manchester Bar and handed the wallet over to the stranger who had been waiting for him.

"The latter searched the wallet, found a paper and copied something out of it; returned the wallet to Willkers; paid him thirty-two pounds, saw to it that Willkers returned the wallet untouched to the barkeeper—and left.

"'And did you ever see him again?'" Waller asked Willkers.

"'Never! And so help me, that's all I had to do with the

mess!' Willkers protested. 'And if it ain't my pickin' the wallet, what's up, anyway?'

"Waller had studied his man sufficiently to know that he was not equal to the serious crimes involved in the case. He had good reason therefore to believe the little pickpocket's story. Then he had him look through the Rogue's Gallery—in vain.

"'You'd better give me a very good description of the man, George,' Waller told him gravely. 'Dig into your memory—hard!'

"George dug and as he recollected features of the man's appearance a sketch artist Waller had called in put down on paper a picturization of the description. Under Waller's expert prodding and thanks to the pickpocket's good eye and memory for faces, a portrait finally appeared on paper. It was that of a powerful, swarthy, broad-cheeked man with gleaming greenish eyes, short black silky mustaches, a face not quite symmetrical, and ears so thin that there was something bat-like about them.

"Then Waller got Parks's list and visited the four more lucky victims of the series of fires who had escaped with their lives. He showed them the sketch made from Willker's description.

"'Has this man visited you?' Waller asked each of these in turn.

"Three of the four recognized the face. It was that of a man who had represented himself to them as investigator for the fire insurance company with whom these people carried policies. As he not only knew they were insured but also the sums and had other information he was allowed in every case to make a formal examination of their rooms. He told them it was in compliance with some new fire regulation passed by the city authorities.

"John Waller now felt he had heard enough to convince him that a serious situation was probably developing that very moment. Taking the names on the rest of Parks's list Waller visited every individual on it. In each case he showed the portrait sketch.

"If a man looking like this comes here, representing himself as an investigator of your fire insurance company, please be sure to let him do what he asks. But at the same time go to the telephone and call up this number. Then say to the person who answers it:

"'I have changed my mind about buying Johnson's copy.

Will you send yours to me at—' Then give your address. Hang up the receiver and try to keep the man in conversation as long as you can. Ask him how to increase your safety against fire. He will talk and save you the risk of arousing his suspicion.'

"Fortunately Parks specialized in insuring professional men, and Waller's instructions were addressed to an intelligent lot.

"Waller himself spent every minute of the next few days waiting at the telephone. An arrangement had been made with the telephone authorities that when the number given by Waller was called it would be passed on at once to Waller at Scotland Yard.

"For several days Waller waited in vain. Then one morning the telephone rang and his suspense was relieved—only to be heightened. A man was saying:

"'Hello! I say, I've changed my mind about buying—' It was the signal arranged upon. 'Send your copy to me at once to—' An address followed.

"Waller leaped from his chair and running to the street jumped into a taxi and was whirled to the address. Waiting in a doorway across the street he was rewarded by seeing the original of Willker's description issuing from the house.

"With Waller had come three of his assistants in the case. He put the first on the man's trail, the second to follow the first, the third to follow the second. When the first shadow felt that the man might begin to suspect he was being followed he gave the second a sign and dropped back. Later the second gave place to the third.

"That evening Waller got a report on the man. He was a Czech living alone, under the name of Menkes, in a respectable boarding house in a quiet part of Chelsea. That was the utmost a diligent investigation yielded that day as Menkes kept strictly to himself.

"John Waller went to the Make-up Room of Scotland Yard and for some hours studied a score of photographs on file there of honest engravers.

"That night a man, quiet but somewhat nervous, applied for a room in the boarding house where Menkes was staying. He got one at his request with windows giving on a bit of garden. Couldn't sleep on the street side, this man told the landlady. He gave his name as Bradley, a jewelry engraver come to London looking for work.

"His room was next to that of Menkes.

"At about one in the morning Menkes came home and was inserting the key in his door when the door next to it flew open and a man sprang out.

"What are you doing here?" he snarled at Menkes.

"Menkes wheeled as if shot. 'What do you mean?' he growled. 'What the hell does it matter to you? This is my room!'

"The other almost wept. He seemed almost beside himself with nervousness, big and strapping as he was.

"I'm sure I beg your pardon!' he apologized. 'Fact is I can't sleep I'm so nervous. You—you didn't see anybody—that is, did you happen to see any one loitering about in the street as you came in?'

"Menkes turned and looked closely at the questioner. The fact was that the question interested him that night more than it would have done at any other time. For after the Scotland Yard men had run Menkes down to his boarding house without arousing his slightest suspicion there set in a surprising change.

"Shadowing of the most bungling sort soon put Menkes on guard. Wherever he turned some burly stranger he had seen before made a transparent effort to pretend that he had no interest in Menkes. This kept up part of the afternoon and most of the evening until Menkes became exceedingly nervous and went home, determined to bolt. Even as he entered the boarding house he saw two broad-shouldered men in plain-clothes loitering on the sidewalk.

"This stranger's question, therefore, interested him enough to make him turn and study him.

"Yes, I did see them,' he said. 'Why?'

"Oh, Good Lord!' the stranger whispered to himself and tried to retreat into his room. But Menkes, who was even more powerful in build than the stranger, pressed in after him.

"What do you want?' the man clamored. 'Who told you to come in here?'

"Menkes sat down. 'Now tell me what's it all about. I may be able to help you.'

"It took a lot of pressing to make the stranger confess finally that he was afraid the police were after him. Then he tried to get Menkes to keep his money for him. Menkes glanced at the neat parcel of new bills; then looked more closely at it.

"So that's it—counterfeiting, eh?' Menkes chuckled.

"The stranger seized his hands. 'For God's sake, don't give me up to them!' he pleaded, clinging hard.

"Menkes tried to shake the man off. 'Let go, you fool! Why should I give you up to the police?'

"But the big terrified man clung to his hands so hard that soon Menkes tried to free himself with main force. It was a hard job; too hard.

"For just as he managed to tear one of his hands loose to hit the stranger and make him let go the door flew open and three burly men threw themselves on Menkes. His right hand made an effort toward his breast pocket. But before he could reach the hilt of a knife, the man who a moment before seemed so terrified twisted a smashing punch to Menkes's jaw and felled him.

"When Menkes came to he was in handcuffs. Four men rifling among his effects in his room found more than ample loot there—identified later by his victims—to secure the man's conviction and confinement in an insane asylum for life."

"Extraordinary!" I commented as Superintendent Thomas finished telling me of this case.

"Then I have picked my instance poorly," he replied. "Because from my knowledge it seems to me a rather typical showing by one of our typical Scotland Yard men."

CHAPTER III

PROTECTING POTENTATES

SUPPOSE yourself, in this chapter, to be solving a fascinating picture puzzle. I submit to you the following figures—not mere pictures, though they are in fact picturesque enough—but actual, living parts of a famous whole:

1. In a little dinghy on the Thames, a quietly smoking man in blue.
2. A Hindustan native on a ratty little pony.
3. A Paris-frocked society bud gambling at Monte Carlo.
4. A perspiring editor working over damp proof sheets.
5. A loudly dressed race track "bookie" drinking in a thieves' resort in London.
6. A scholarly looking man thumbing catalogue cards.

The game I put to you is to combine these dissimilar figures into the most compactly built unit that has ever gained fame for the precise working-together of all its many and varied parts. What can that whole be? The answer is Scotland Yard.

From a first-hand study of the way the police of several nations hunt criminals, I have been impressed by this fact above others—that a race hunts men with the same traits with which it plays its games. The Anglo-Saxons, famous on cricket and Rugby fields for magnificent teamwork, show the same talent when they go man-hunting for Scotland Yard.

But just as in Rugby, at any given moment it is some man that carries the ball, so in any hunt on the part of Scotland Yard, it is always some man or group or division of Scotland Yard heads the play. But whoever heads the play remembers that it is not a running race he is heading, but a team.

In the particular instance I want to relate, it was the Special Branch of Scotland Yard that was at the head of the hunt. This is the least known department of that little known but famous institution. Its quiet name, Special Branch, in itself is designed to avert speculation about it on the part of the public. It is also the one department that has about it

more of the glamour of good fiction than even the rest of Scotland Yard.

For it is the duty of the Special Branch to guard the British Empire, the lives of those whose hands are on the helm of its government and to protect in England the ambassadors and royalty of other countries.

It is the duty of this branch of the Yard to render safe both state and statesmen from a class of people the ordinary detective does not understand so well; from men and women who work in the dark not to steal a million dollars, not to revenge a personal hurt, but to overturn a state, to pick and mine a nation's strongholds, to shake the British Empire to its foundations if they can.

The men—and women as often as men—whom Special Branch hunts are vastly different in type from the burglar and the murderer on file in the Criminal Registry Office. They are usually fanatics, revolutionists, idealists, visionaries, often spiritual heroes. Were Scotland Yard in existence in 1776, it would be George Washington whom it would hunt. It is plain, therefore, that such work has to have a special service assigned to it.

Although I had a most interesting half hour with the recent chief of Special Branch, Sir Basil Thompson, himself a writer, I can report less of the machinery of his department than of the rest of Scotland Yard. For with all the generous courtesy the chiefs of Scotland Yard extended to me, the door to Special Branch was opened for only the most fleeting glimpse.

But Sir Basil Thompson did describe to me something of the organization that makes up Special Branch. In every country in the world there are men and women leading what appeared to be humdrum existences as newsvenders, club idlers, hotel porters, barkeepers, idle rich, office cleaners, race track touts, street beggars, ladies of leisure, bookkeepers or whatnots.

The world regards them little. If it regarded them more their usefulness would be impaired—to Scotland Yard's Special Branch. For these are what Sir Basil Thompson described to me quietly as his "correspondents." They are the eyes, ears and whispering lips of Special Branch.

Coolie and Englishman, Japanese and Dutchman, soldier of fortune, or beggar in the street, in New York as well as in Siam; by day and by night, and always quietly, by means of sign and signal, cipher and code, these correspondents keep in touch with each other and with their chief in London, and

weave nets invisible about those other actors of assumed rôles, the spinners of revolution and political intrigue.

And between the two sets of players at that fascinating game, what subtle, thrilling moves and counters, plots and counterplots, what brilliant sacrifices and equally brilliant checkmates there must be to record.

Or take a mere errand, really nothing more than porter's work, carrying a parcel to a given place, on which a group of Special Branch men were sent. I have no exciting adventure to chronicle in connection with it. The parcel was safely delivered and without incident.

Three men, portly, comfortable-looking workmen with pipes in their mouths, quietly walked to an office in the jewelry section of Bond Street in London, one of them carrying a satchel containing what might be his overalls. Another carried, wrapped in burlap, what looked like, say, some long tools.

But a heavily documented receipt signed by the man to whom these parcels were quietly delivered, gave the following description of the article that came out of the workman's satchel:

"It weighs forty ounces. The circlet in front bears the Great Sapphire from the crown of Charles II. The rim is clustered with sapphires and emeralds, inclosed in borders thickly set with diamonds and pearls. Alternately on festoons are eight crosses-patee and eight fleur-de-lis of silver set with gems.

"In front is a large spinel ruby of irregular form, two inches long, valued at one hundred and ten thousand pounds. It was worn by Henry V at Agincourt. In the center of a cross-patee at the top is the ring worn by Edward the Confessor. In addition to the above gems there are four other rubies, eleven emeralds, sixteen sapphires, 277 pearls and 2,783 diamonds."

What these three men in workmen's clothes carried in their seedy satchel and burlap-covered parcel were the royal crown of Great Britain and its scepter, being taken to the jeweler's for treatment.

In the particular case I want to describe as illustrating the teamwork of Scotland Yard with, this time, Special Branch heading the play, the names are assumed, for reasons that will become apparent with the telling.

It so happened that one of the lesser but most troublesome of India's native rulers was having a stormy struggle with revolutionists within his little domain. At the same time he

was getting on the nerves of the British government; and the British government was affecting his nerves just as badly.

Raj Bey, as we shall call him, was, from the British government's point of view, a bad boy, doubly troublesome because his influence among the other Indian princes was considerable. On the other hand, Raj Bey considered the British government an invading tyrant, who had robbed him and his fellow Indian princes of their ancient powers and was plotting to rob him of what little influence he still wielded.

When among his subjects, therefore, there arose a revolutionary movement directed against his tyranny, Raj Bey was convinced that it was really directed by the British government.

Now the latter had enough to do carrying its own burdens. In reality the British government was not in the least interested in the outcome of this revolutionary movement. Also, it was to the interest of the British Foreign Office to convince Raj Bey that it had not inspired the agitation against him nor sympathized with it.

Raj Bey had sent his oldest son—let us call him the Prince—to be educated at one of the big English universities. He did this with the canny motive of having his son, who would succeed him, learn the ways of the British, that he might the better circumvent them some day, when he himself became ruler.

The Prince was a sensitive, highly intelligent youth of eighteen, who took to Western culture and ideas rapidly. Among the things he soon grew away from was his father's love for splendor and personal show, and in its place he acquired genuine simplicity and democracy. He was bookish in tastes, cultivated few friends, and these mostly among the good students at the university, regardless of their station in life.

One day the Prince packed a few bags and without fuss and feathers took the train down to London, thence to go back to his father's troubled little realm for a summer vacation. There was no intimation of anything wrong having happened to the Prince until a month later. Then a wireless in code from the British government in India reached Special Branch.

Raj Bey and the royal party waiting at the station in their capital for the prince's train had waited in vain.

The Prince had completely and mysteriously disappeared somewhere on his journey between his university and his father's home. Not a word had been heard from the young

man since the day he left the university when he had cabled, "Coming." No one had seen him. Whereupon Raj Bey began raging against the revolutionists in his land as the kidnapers of his son, and against the British government as fellow agents in the crime.

But his raging was in private. For with the tortuous psychology of the Oriental, he felt that he could do more in secret and by devious ways toward rescuing his son than by crying aloud to the world. At the same time he believed he could more effectively revenge himself on his enemies—among whom he included the British government—by keeping the matter quiet as far as possible.

So he explained that his son did not arrive when expected because he had decided on a leisurely hunting trip incognito, his telegram announcing the change of program had unavoidably been delayed.

But some of Sir Basil Thompson's correspondents in Raj Bey's palace sent word that Raj was making dangerous capital of the kidnaping—dangerous to the precarious peace between the British government and a group of Indian rajahs of whom Raj Bey was leader.

The order went forth, therefore, that Special Branch was to find the Prince, but to search for him as quietly as his own father was doing. There were reasons of state why the kidnaping should not stir up a public commotion, reasons, however, with which this story is not concerned.

Through the ether over two continents there went out wireless messages to Sir Basil Thompson's correspondents, silent summonses to the hunt. In London, with Special Branch leading, the whole machinery and team of Scotland Yard swung into the search.

The Prince's life at the university was examined minutely; all his associates secretly investigated—with no result. His last known movement was when on the afternoon of his disappearance he boarded a train at the university town. There the known trail ended.

A council of Scotland Yard chiefs was held and the abstract possibilities of what may have appeared were canvassed. Raj Bey's revolutionists were at first the most promising explanation. But Sir Basil Thompson's correspondents in the ranks of the revolutionists said no.

And Scotland Yard went by what they said. Another possibility was that the Prince might have been killed by some one he had met on the journey for loot, or he might be held

for ransom. Further, he might have had his own reasons for disappearing. But the latter possibility was rejected as groundless.

The council did not rest long in abstract discussions. Part of Scotland Yard's hidden machinery is that strangest of things to keep hidden—a string of newspapers, daily, bi-weekly, weekly and occasional. In most of these there appeared the photograph of a young East Indian, sensitive and aristocratic of face, bearing no name or description.

For although the newspapers of Scotland Yard are limited strictly to police circulation and strictly forbidden to anybody else, there are thousands of copies circulated and Special Branch was anxious to keep the matter exceedingly quiet. With the photograph went a line of apparently innocuous caption; but translated by those who knew, it read: "Information wanted on this person dating later than May 12."

The notice had to be rushed into print and the figure of the perspiring editor over damp proof sheets, which I proposed as part of the picture puzzle at the head of this article, makes his appearance at this phase of the hunt. Bundles of these newspapers fresh from the presses were thrown into little closed green motors and rushed to the different police stations in London; others were mailed to the police throughout the country; still others went to every one of Sir Basil's correspondents, far-flung over Europe and Asia.

Two hours later there reported to Special Branch the second figure of our puzzle—a quiet weather-beaten man in double-breasted blue coat and trousers and blue peaked hat, on which two anchors in silver were crossed.

He was part of Scotland Yard's uniformed force, a Thames River bobby, a member of that outwardly unassuming and actually picturesque police of London's water front, of whom I hope subsequently to speak in this book.

He had come to report something in connection with the photograph of the young East Indian about whom information was wanted. It seems that this Thames River bobby was sitting in his little dinghy near Waterloo Bridge two days after the Prince had disappeared, quietly smoking his pipe. The bobby did not know at the time that a prince was being searched for.

The night was soft with approaching summer. Down the river came a gay little open launch with a party of four young men on board, apparently bound on pleasure. One of them was the young East Indian of the photograph. What had

drawn the attention of the bobby who, among many other picturesque duties, acts as traffic officer on the water, was that the port light on the launch was almost out.

The bobby took hold of his oars, pulled to midstream and, meeting the launch, warned its occupants that their light was dim. It was then that he saw the young man of the photograph. He was apparently asleep, his head resting on the shoulder of a companion, who also seemed ready to fall asleep.

The other two young men, both white, were singing in a manner that told the bobby of stops at refreshment places for something stronger than tea. But there was nothing otherwise out of the way about the whole party.

As the young man at the wheel seemed only gay, without being in the least "plattered," the bobby contented himself with a warning about the light, and on being politely met with a compliance of his order, he pulled his dinghy back to shore.

There he made a note of the occurrence in his notebook, including the name on the bow of the launch, a thing he was bound to do by police regulations. But his trained memory also subconsciously recorded the faces of the young men. This note came vividly into consciousness when the bobby got his copy of *Printed Information*, the morning newspaper of Scotland Yard, containing the photograph of the Prince.

The bobby recognized the photograph and came to Scotland Yard to report what he knew and something he learned later. The later information was that the launch had been stolen further up the river, but had been abandoned near the mouth of the Thames and restored to its owners by the police.

Special Branch was impressed with the bobby's report. It told them that they had an exceedingly clever gang to play against. That it was a kidnaping case was fairly clear. A gang that drugged its victim, stole an open launch, got one of the confederates to play drunk and to support the drugged young man on his shoulder, while two others *sang* as they went down the Thames, was no ordinary gang.

There was originality and boldness in the procedure. At the mouth of the Thames there was undoubtedly a yacht waiting to take the Prince on board and sail—where? Special Branch eliminated America as the possible port of call for whatever vessel had borne the drugged young Prince away. Which left only all of Europe, Asia, Africa and Australia to search.

The bobby could remember only vaguely the other young men of the party—it was night and the boat was poorly lit. But that little gay note of the abductors singing he was sure of. So on that slender thread Scotland Yard began to spin its web.

One of the most effective weapons in the criminal hunting arsenal of that institution is based on the richly proved fact that criminals are creatures of habit, like the rest of their fellow men, and that they repeat successful technique in their crimes just as a popular novelist repeats tricks of writing that have already proved "sure fire."

There is therefore at Scotland Yard a vast catalogue, the Criminal Registry Office, or "C. R. O." as it is familiarly spoken of in the Yard, consisting of scores of thousands of cards in steel cabinets, on which are noted the tricks and turns convicted criminals had used in the carrying out of their crimes.

"Singing to cover up their crooked work, eh?" murmured a scholarly looking man in C. R. O. "Let's see who else likes to sing at his work." It was Inspector Hendry, the man in charge of C. R. O. and largely its creator. Bending over some of the drawers in the steel cabinets, he began thumbing some of the many cards there. He or one of his assistants would be another of the figures I proposed in our picture puzzle at the beginning of this chapter.

After some time ten cards were taken out of the catalogue for further study. On all of them were recorded only the vaguest, most remote resemblances to the sort of thing Scotland Yard was looking for. But in the lexicon of the Yard there is no such phrase as "too remote a possibility to bother with."

So a squad of men was put to work tracing the whereabouts of the ten men selected as possibilities in the case. The interest finally focused on a young man who was known to Scotland Yard as "the singing plumber."

The record showed that Samuel Westwick, alias Pipes, alias several respectable sounding names, was convicted of burglary, had served several years and was now somewhere in the wilderness of London. It seems that prior to his conviction there had been a series of robberies in the West End of London that had puzzled the police considerably.

Finally Scotland Yard found an element common to all these robberies. There had been a plumber at work in each of the houses robbed, a gay young fellow who sang at his work.

Now, it is human nature to trust a man whose heart is so light that he sings at his work.

So the singing plumber had little trouble in doing his looting unsuspected—until Scotland Yard gave him a chance to sing at his work in prison. But since his release from prison some months before the kidnaping of the Prince, he had not been in trouble.

That was the clew—if it can be called that—Scotland Yard had to work with. But it was enough to enlist its energy. A search throughout London's underworld resorts soon located Samuel Westwick. He seemed to be at ease in the world, living in comfort apparently without doing plumbing or any other kind of work. He was just having a good time spending money, treating others to drinks, but himself not drinking much.

A few evenings after he was located, he was in his favorite drinking place, a bar near Jermyn Street, when a loudly-dressed young man struck up an acquaintance with him over drinks. It soon developed that this young fellow—whom we include in the little gallery of figures I have noted before—was a race-track bookie who had been fairly lucky of late and was feeling brotherly to the world at large and to Samuel Westwick in particular.

He was an amusing cockney, shrewd apparently, and Samuel Westwick soon began to suspect—for their friendship ripened fast—that up his sleeve the bookie had interesting possibilities for money making; possibilities perhaps not strictly respectable, but all the more remunerative.

Sure enough, after their friendship had ripened quickly, the bookie told Samuel Westwick that there was money to be made in connection with a coming race at Epsom Downs. It appeared that the owner of the favorite in a big race had made a poor guess in leaving his horse in the care of a certain trainer; and said trainer together with a jockey and one or two others were willing to sacrifice victory and other things in return for adequate compensation.

But the sum involved was too big for the bookie to get together. Did Samuel Westwick know of any one who could "touch big money" in behalf of such a possibility? The owner of the horse which would surely win should the favorite be "pulled" was out of the question for the deal. But those who bet on his horse would be sure to clean up.

Westwick said he would see. There was somebody he would write to and it would take several days for the answer to come

back. He did write. He dropped the letter in a box and went away to spend a pleasant evening with his new bookie friend. Half an hour after he had left the letter box a mail man collected the contents. But instead of taking it to the post office he sent it to Scotland Yard.

There all the letters were opened and read and one addressed to "James Pierce, Hotel de Paris, Monte Carlo," was retained; the others were forwarded to their destinations. This letter appeared to be written by an idiot, it was such gibberish.

"Give Uncle a slap soothingly," was a sample sentence. But Scotland Yard's experts in deciphering codes got to work and found the key to the "gibberish." Translated, it set forth the bookie's scheme and asked "Lonnie" if he saw anything in it to interest "us." Then the letter was sealed again and sent on to its destination.

Several days later the post office held up a letter from Monte Carlo addressed to Samuel West. Scotland Yard got it without delay and read in it a laconic "no." There was not even a signature to it.

Hotel de Paris at Monte Carlo, where the monosyllabic letter was written, is the hostelry that stands a few feet away from the world-famous gambling Casino. Every conceivable kind of person stops there except one—the penniless kind.

Among the latest arrivals at the hotel was a young American woman, almost young enough to qualify as a flapper. She was traveling alone, a spectacle to which Europe is now becoming accustomed when the woman is an American. And she was spending considerable money, which is also expected of Americans.

Her success at the roulette tables in the Casino was indifferent. But her stakes were big. She found herself sitting one afternoon next to a dashing looking young English couple, who were having poor luck. In fact this young woman's jade-colored, one thousand franc chips got swept up by the croupier's rake several times, along with the chips lost by the English couple. Finally she flashed them a smile.

"Gee whiz, we seem to be in the same leaky boat together!"

She was a sociable creature, it soon developed, the daughter of a Chicago meat magnate, who got "sick" of everybody and was traveling alone to "get a change." Her talk betrayed without too great blatancy that her chief problem was how to spend money interestingly. The English couple covertly looked her over, spent several evenings with her, got friendly

quickly, and were soon helping her with her problem of how to spend money interestingly.

The man was about twenty-nine; a typical Englishman of the upper middle class; from his own account, wealthy and without career other than escape from boredom. For since the thrill of the Great War, which he had had for three years as artillery officer, life seemed particularly dull.

His name was James Pierce. The young woman with him, a pretty woman, but with a hard, keen look of intelligence in her face that looked oddly out of character, was Janet Sanders, an heiress of Devonshire, engaged to Pierce.

The young American, sad to state, was a rebel against her country's edict as to alcohol, and one evening expressed her protest by imbibing too much of the stronger beverages, when the three of them were together in the suite occupied by Janet Sanders.

Early in the evening she passed into a state of leaden sleep, and Miss Sanders made her comfortable on a couch. Her whispered comment was, "She sleeps like a lamb. She will be ready for sheering soon."

The young American apparently awoke in the dead of night, stumbled noisily around, moaning about her "headache," demanding icewater and generally making it hard for Miss Sanders to sleep. She was finally induced to go back to the couch and sleep. But Miss Sanders thought she heard her once or twice again.

In the morning the young American was very contrite and declared she would be good for the rest of that day and stick to her own room at the hotel. But she must have retained much of her headache, for she took a walk in the fresh air that afternoon. Her walk took her quite a distance along the road to Mentone, so much so that when a machine with two serious looking men offered her a lift she accepted.

On the road near Cap Martin the young American took out an envelope bearing the address, "John Pierce, Hotel de Paris, Monte Carlo," and a canceled Hindustani stamp in the corner.

"That was all I could find in her room, Mr. Bray," she said apologetically. "The Sanders woman kept waking up and I had to get what I could—"

Mr. Bray was already deep in the letter found inside, and comparing it with a cipher code he took out of his pocket. When he had finished reading, his frosty blue eyes lit up.

"I've no complaint to make with your find, Miss Lanier," he smiled grimly. "None whatsoever! But I regret that we'll

have to part company so soon. You don't mind taking the trolley back to your hotel, do you?"

She did not seem to mind in the least. That evening she was hilarious in relating her adventure to her two English friends; how she had been compelled for the first time in her life to ride in a trolley car.

A Hindustani native policeman on a ratty little pony was jogging along under a broiling sun in the foothills of a sparsely settled country when he met a party of men on horseback, carrying peddler's packs. It may have been Asiatic impassivity or the enervating sun or some other reason; but without the amenities of talk to be expected at the meeting of strangers, the newcomers, all of them apparently Orientals, jogged along in silence with the policeman.

Their destination took them into less and less frequented roads. By nightfall they all rested in a thicket of trees far from the bit of mule-track they had left. When at about midnight they left their thicket it was on foot and very quietly. After creeping along in the wake of the native policeman for half an hour the party came near what looked like a hut made of mud.

Here the whole party took out very modern looking Western weapons, magazine revolvers of excellent make, and softly approached the hut. The native policeman rapped at the door, while the others remained in deep shadow.

From the inside of the hut sounded the rattle of a chain fastening and the door opened cautiously. A huge head and ponderous shoulders showed dimly in the partly opened door and some curt words in Hindustani were snarled. The policeman whined a reply, apparently unsatisfactory to the owner of the head and shoulders. For he suddenly flung the door open and lunged for the policeman with a *kris*, a crooked native knife.

But from behind the policeman spurted the fire of a revolver shot and the big native pitched headlong to the ground. For some time the party outside waited for further developments from within the hut. Then when no one seemed inclined to come out, the men outside, guided by pocket electric torches, cautiously ventured into the hut.

It was a squalid place, but it held a royal prisoner. Raj Bey's heir apparent, wasted with imprisonment, was huddled in a corner, chained to the wall.

He was taken to the nearest city, given food, rest and a regal hunting outfit with many trophies purchased quietly

from dealers. A week later Raj Bey and his royal party went again to the station to meet the Prince. This time the occasion was complete and the prince's big bag of hunting trophies formed part of a triumphal procession. So far as the world knew the Prince's trip from England to his home was one unbroken excursion of pleasure.

But a representative of Special Branch told Raj Bey with much circumstantial evidence what had really happened to his son. When the young man boarded the train at the university town to go to London he took a first-class carriage in which he found a fellow traveler, a young man of apparent means and refinement.

The stranger struck up a conversation and it appeared that he knew several of the Prince's friends; that he was acquainted with India's problems; that he sympathized exceedingly with those who complained of England's tyranny in India, and in several other respects proved himself a sympathetic travel acquaintance. When, therefore, the stranger took out an appetizing looking hamper at tea-time and invited the Prince to join him, the young man did not like to refuse.

The stranger was the James Pierce of London and Monte Carlo, the black sheep of a good family, athlete, college man, veteran of the Great War and leader of a gang of clever, fearless adventurers. In the tea he proffered the Prince was a powerful narcotic that sent the young man into a deep sleep for days, with intervals of near-consciousness, in which he was given more of the drug.

When the train arrived in London, Pierce, pretending to be half drunk himself, told the porters that his bosom friend was "dead to the world" with drink and asked assistance to a taxicab.

Pierce kept up the play skillfully and with complete success, and whenever necessary roused the Prince sufficiently to give the effect of a man hopelessly drunk and ready to drop off to sleep again. In London Pierce's confederates, Samuel Westwick and another, stole a launch and with the Prince on board, unconscious and on Pierce's arm, went down the Thames, where the bobby saw them, Westwick singing as he used to sing in the guise of a plumber when he robbed houses.

At the mouth of the Thames was a small yacht chartered by Pierce and his gang, which took the Prince through the Mediterranean and to India. There the Prince, still semi-conscious, was taken ashore, ostensibly a very sick youth in the care of several loving friends. In this way he was smug-

gled to the mountain hut where the Special Branch men found and rescued him and restored him to his papa.

Pierce and his partner, Janet Sanders, really the brains of the gang, stayed in Monte Carlo to act as the link between London and the rest of the gang in India. Had not Special Branch spoiled their plans the Prince would have remained in captivity some time longer. Then Raj Bey would be discreetly informed that for a very substantial reward—the word ransom would not be used—he could have his heir apparent back.

None of the gang were arrested. That would mean publicity and neither Raj Bey nor Special Branch wanted it in this case. But Pierce and his confederates found life thereafter considerably restricted in its privacy. They were followed everywhere they went; received countless visits from the police wherever they found themselves, and were made to feel in many ways that an uncomfortably omniscient eye was upon them.

If a Rugby football had consciousness, it might have felt in a game something akin to what this gang felt about Scotland Yard—that a powerful organization moving with almost machine-like teamwork was playing with it, keen eyes bent upon it, keen minds planning plays with it, and keen nerves executing every play. Special Branch carried the ball in this case. But the team was the whole organization of Scotland Yard.

CHAPTER IV

PIRATES OF THE RIVER

PROSPERO waved a magic wand and the storm on the sea went down. Even as a bit of magic in a tale, it is a good-sized feat. But after all what he did was to change only a single mood. That sea may have been a peaceful citizen in the main and the storm but a rare indulgence which only emphasized its generally placid nature.

But suppose it had been turbulent in character with a history of violence reaching far into its past. If *then* Prospero had not only calmed a passing storm, but actually changed that roaring lion of a sea into the most peaceable of waters ever after, he would have performed no greater miracle than has been accomplished by the London "bobby," best known, best loved policeman in the world.

The miracle brought about by the bobby was not wrought on mere water, but on a vastly more stubborn element—the character of a race; and what is more, one of the most stubborn races in history, the Anglo-Saxon. Of course, this was not accomplished with a single wave of a hand, but was magic, nevertheless, in the sense of a marvelous change.

Strictly speaking, one cannot separate in such a consideration as the above the work of the bobby from that of its twin, Scotland Yard. Also strictly speaking these two are more than twins, they are the right and left arms of the same body, the Metropolitan Police of London. But in the main Scotland Yard deals with criminals and the bobby with citizens—and it is with the taming of London's citizens that this tale of magic is concerned.

Let us consider what London was, then compare it with what London is now. To show that it is not merely a passing storm which has been subdued, consider what the chroniclers said of the English people at the death of Henry V. "Every man in England who could, robbed forthwith another." A short but far from sweet testimonial of the temper of a people. Or let us consider London much later, say, in the year 1780, to see a picture so astounding that only the masses of docu-

ments in the archives of the British government could make me believe it of the placid London I know.

In that year some religious measure came up in Parliament, then in session in the historic edifice on the Thames in the heart of London. A fanatic, Lord George Gordon, who was later proved to be mad, incited the population to rise against the proposed measure. They rose, some sixty thousand strong. From the slums they came and most of London then would be considered slums to-day.

Under the fruit and vegetable stands of Covent Garden, for instance, were places mongrel dogs might have made their homes in—and did. But along with them were hundreds of children of both sexes, orphans and outcasts, abandoned by parents and society. They lived there in a mode little different from that of the dogs and cats with which they fought for shelter and bits of food.

From these filthy kennels the children would slink about London picking up whatever food, rags or bits of money they could steal. With such a start in life, it is not hard to imagine what these hatcheries were sending forth into the life of London. Gin was selling at less than five cents a pint.

There were eight thousand known places in London where stolen goods were openly bought and sold. It is not surprising, therefore, that when Lord Gordon called to the mob for violence and license that one out of every twenty inhabitants of London should come in answer to his call.

That mob of sixty thousand first made for the gin-mills. The big casks were rolled to the sidewalks and through too great greed were smashed up. The powerful stuff ran in the gutters in freshets and that mob got down on all fours and drank.

When they rose they were ripe for Lord Gordon's maniac leadership. First they went to the big Newgate Prison and tried to burn their way in. There was not enough fuel, so they broke into the home of the governor of the prison, threw the furniture out of the windows, made a bonfire before the wooden gates and soon had them on fire.

Rushing in, the mob freed three hundred murderers, highway robbers, thieves and other criminals of all sorts. With these as lieutenants the mob gathered spirit for further adventure. Members of Parliament on their way to make their country's laws were held up, stripped and beaten to help them make up their minds as to what was good for the country.

Then the mob remembered there was gold in the Bank of

England and swarmed to that august institution to help themselves to it. But the soldiers, who were the sole organization then existing intended to deal with riots, unslung their rifles and let the mob have lead. Discouraged by casualties and the stone walls of the edifice, the rioters went elsewhere for plunder.

Torches made their appearance. A house went up in flames. Another. Five more. Ten, thirty, and finally thirty-six incendiary fires were soon lighting up a carnival of plunder. Militia and troops were called out and for two days they pumped lead into the mob of sixty thousand men, women and children. It is surprising how few casualties those two days brought, two hundred and ten killed, two hundred and forty-eight wounded, twenty-one hanged.

But that day London learned its first lesson in the course that produced the famous bobby—the lesson that soldiery are not fitted to cope with the problem of keeping their fellow citizens at peace. A soldier knows how to shoot, but not how to keep matters from getting to the shooting point.

With the Gordon riots, as instance, must be imagined similar upheavals in London in the food riots of 1800; the Luddite riots of 1811 and 1816; the Spitalfields riots; the Peterloo riots of 1819 and others. Or consider a picture of London just a hundred years ago, to understand the difference in things to-day. Let us quote from so mighty an authority and unsensational a source as the *Encyclopedia Britannica*:

“The state of London at that date—1820—and indeed of the whole country, was deplorable. Crimes were rampant, highwaymen terrorized roads, footpads infested streets, burglaries were of constant occurrence, river thieves on the Thames committed depredations wholesale.

“Watchmen appointed by the parishes were useless, inadequate, inefficient, and untrustworthy, acting often as accessories in aiding and abetting crime. Year after year the shortcomings and defects were emphasized.”

At that time, it has been computed, there was one criminal in England for every twenty-four of the population. On many street corners in London in broad daylight stood bands who seized every fairly well clad passerby, man or woman, stripped them of every bit of clothing, robbed them, tied them naked to a post, beat them up for good measure and left them thus until some citizen cut them loose.

Banks were robbed daily by bands of thieves and cutthroats, who made off with the loot with every reason to feel that they

would not be punished for it. For the educated crooks, who usually planned these robberies, would go to the bank officials and say:

"Look here, you know you have no means of hunting down the men who took your money. There is no police. And even if you did catch them, that would not bring you back your money. So be sensible. Offer a large enough reward, ask no questions, promise not to prosecute and you will get your money back."

The "reward" was usually nearly equal to the sum looted. But the banks were so helpless and the thieves so powerful that even the slight difference in money thus gained prompted the bankers practically in every case to pay the blackmail and waive prosecution.

Lest it be thought all this was due to laxity of law, let it be noted at once that at this time the laws of England punished one hundred and sixty different kinds of crimes by hanging. In 1816 in a single day there were forty criminals hung. Between the years of 1805 and 1818 more than two hundred were hung for forgery alone.

Another instance of the state of affairs at that time can be found in reports of Newgate Prison, where there was such a number of children that school had to be organized for them. The teacher appointed was a felon who was being held pending arrangements which would deport him to a penal colony.

Against such conditions the citizens had to cope in whatever way they could. So little protection did the city of London afford them that house owners would plant man-traps of steel and guns that would be fired automatically by any one who crossed their front lawns or backyards after dark. But such a number of innocent people were killed this way that Parliament finally passed laws forbidding these contrivances.

The tastes of the majority of the rest of the population of London not definitely included in the criminal classes were rather rough, judging from a regular proceeding that took place in the streets of the Hackney and Bethnal Green sections of London. Here the slum populations would make up a purse and buy a bullock of some drover. Then peas were pushed into the poor beast's ears to press against his eardrums, sharp iron spears were dug into his flanks and he was hunted through the streets of London by the shrieking mobs of men, women, children and dogs until he was run down, killed, and torn to pieces. This sport was the program every Tuesday and Friday.

Against all this disorder and crime, what was London's protection? Each parish hired a "watchman" to keep it safe. He was usually an old rheumatic creature, clothed in a heavy cape and armed only with a long stave and a dim lantern. Twice an hour he would come out of his little wooden sentry box and call out the time and weather, shivering half with cold, half with fright. Or, if he had a bit of courage, he would be partner with some thief or highway robber and actually laid the ground for more crime.

It was no wonder, therefore, that the "watch" was the natural butt of the population's jokes and that the dashing highwayman was usually the hero of its romances. The young bloods of Queen Anne's time and later formed themselves into bands and played their favorite games in the streets of London.

One of these was a kind of fox hunt in which some respectable citizen would be set upon by these well-to-do young ruffians and hunted through the streets with riding crops. Another pastime, "boxing the watch," consisted of stealing up to a watchman's sentry box and tipping it over with a man inside.

Meanwhile on the roads leading to the great city, the highwaymen of romance and also of fact plied their picturesque career. They held up coaches and robbed their occupants by day, and spent the loot in London's smartest inns and restaurants at night. No wonder young imagination was filled by such figures as Dick Turpin and Claude Duval, than with such agents of peace and protection as the "watch."

But the forces of law and order in London were beginning to rally. Sir Henry Fielding, the famous English novelist, was a magistrate then and he organized first a foot patrol and later a horse patrol of different material, from the useless and worse than useless watchmen. The horse patrols were not to be mistaken. They were big, fine fellows, well mounted, and wore blue double-breasted coats, scarlet vests, leather stocks, white leather boots spurred with steel, black leather hats and were armed with pistol, saber, club and handcuffs.

It was not long before the free-riding gentry on Hounslow Heath found their style much cramped by these newcomers. Whereas formerly Dick Turpin would have only frightened drivers and passengers to deal with in a holdup, now he was likely to hear the drumming of powerful hoofs and have to turn his attention to a couple of riding devils blazing away at

him with revolvers and more than able to escort him to the gallows. With the help of the foot patrol Hounslow Heath and other roads about London were cleared of highwaymen.

Sir John Fielding succeeded his brother as magistrate, and further developed the horse guard and foot patrol, and added to them a force of men in plain clothes, whom he sent out to bring in thieves complained of. They were vigorous, keen-eyed men, who were really the predecessors of the present Scotland Yard.

They were more public in their approach, however, than the modern detective. These men carried batons with a crown at the tip, the sight of which admitted them as easily into thieves' resorts as into the houses of honest citizens. From the location of the court in Bow Street, these men were long known as "Bow Street Runners."

But these measures were only feeble beginnings. The Bow Street Runners, for example, received incredibly little for their work, and it paid them better to wait until a known thief committed a crime and there was a reward out for him before they put their hearts into the hunt.

Constables, of whom there were only three in the eighteen square miles of Kensington, for instance, were paid as late as 1829, about four dollars as wages and one hundred and seventy-five dollars for every thief caught. In spite of an undoubted improvement in the character of what police there was, the first quarter of the nineteenth century found London most inadequately protected from crime.

Finally in 1829 Sir Robert Peel organized, under a special act of Parliament, the present Metropolitan Police of London. Sir Richard Mayne put it on a working basis, but the policeman of that time and for a long time after was a "Peeler," named after the creator of the act, just as the "bobby" of today perhaps owes his nickname to the first name of some man.

The new type of policeman was most carefully picked, so much so that between 1830 and 1838 five thousand probationers were dismissed and six thousand resigned of their own accord. Those who stood the test were men of good physique, intelligent and of irreproachable character.

Nevertheless there was tremendous opposition to the new police on the part of the same public that had suffered so much from the lack of adequate protection. Your Britisher would put up with any evil rather than lose what he considers the slightest bit of his liberty. For here was a body of power-

ful men, strictly organized, under single command *heavily armed*—other than the king's army.

Peel was accused of organizing the force to seize the throne of England for the Duke of Wellington. British distaste for armed men in civilian life is a virtue, but it was a tremendous obstacle in the path of progress for the Metropolitan Police. The population suspected and hated the new police. The new police, not having learned its present temper, trod on the toes of the public. Both sides made grievous mistakes.

One or two of the new police in plain clothes did some awkward spying. The Britisher's passion for his home as his castle and his privacy as something priceless, were aroused and caused a terrific public uproar as the incidents became known. In a clash between the police and a big crowd, a constable was killed. The jury brought in a verdict of *justifiable homicide*.

But meanwhile the police were becoming stronger in numbers and effectiveness and the public began to feel a degree of respect for them. But individual members of the police had yet to learn something of that tact in dealing with the public which the bobby of to-day has, in a measure, greater than any other policeman on earth.

In 1855 some riots in connection with the Trading Bill brought the police and the crowds into a clash and the police used their clubs. Another public uproar arose. An Englishman does not stand for being clubbed. The matter went to the House of Commons and a thorough investigation was held.

It was then found that while some of the policemen were to blame for the clubbing, the great majority of them had been patient and tactful. The result of the investigation was a better understanding on the part of the London public of their police, and a lesson to the police to use greater patience and tact toward their public.

When riots next arose in connection with the Reform Bill, in 1869, it was found that more policemen were hurt than rioters. The police had learned self-control, and the public recognizing this gave in to the injured policemen. That was a long step forward in the making of the bobby of to-day.

From then on a sort of benign circle began to work slowly in favor of the new régime. As the public for the first time showed itself inclined to be friendly toward the police, the latter found it easier to treat the public with more tact and

patience. This, in turn, had its effect on the public and again in turn resulted in a still more friendly attitude on the part of the police.

Year after year this closer coöperation between public and police grew until to-day London is perhaps the safest large city to live in of any in the world. What has brought about this great difference from the picture of London a hundred years ago? I spoke of the magic wand the bobby has waved. But the explanation goes deeper than merely the effect of an excellent police on a public they have cowed.

The fact is that the great prevalence of crime and violence in London a century and more ago, was not due to an innate lawlessness on the part of the public there, but to the fact that it had not learned self-control. A husky young fellow in a rude environment will do things that come under the head of disorder and crime.

But that does not mean that he is a hoodlum or a criminal by nature. If he is of the right stuff, with time he grows up, becomes more civilized, learns self-respect and self-discipline. This in turn has its effect on his environment, and if there is spiritual health in both him and his neighborhood, both will grow orderly.

The London public was just such a turbulent youth. As its civilization grew older, it realized what waste in life there is in lawlessness. When the Metropolitan Police was organized it was really the London public establishing self-discipline over itself.

If public and police clashed at first, so does a young man's unruly self clash at first with his own attempts of self-discipline. But with time the conflicting forces find more or less adjustment and public and youth grow up.

What the bobby on the street had to contend with and accomplished, his brother bobby on the Thames River met and conquered on the water, and thereby wrought a story perhaps even more picturesque than that of the London streets. For centuries there have come to this short, wide-mouthed river the ships of all the world, bearing riches.

It is easy to imagine the wealth from all ports of the seven seas that came to this, the world's greatest market place. Teak-wood and tea, ivory, pearls and rice, silks and delicate pottery from China and Japan; spices and rubies, opium and precious metals, gold and deadly poisons from India.

From Africa came chattering monkeys and trumpeting elephants, diamonds in the rough, gold, silver and ivory. Coffee

and emeralds, frozen beef and gums, precious woods and cattle, rare birds and quicksilver are brought from South America; machinery and sugar, beef and tempered steel, moving picture films and fountain pens, shoes and bridges from America; wool and what not from Australia—and have I named only a thousandth part of it all?

Here we have then on the one hand the greatest gathering place of the riches yielded by all the earth, on vessels tied to the wharves of the most populous city in the world; and on the other hand a population rampant in violence and crime, as I have shown above. It is no wonder then that the river harbor of London bred its own picturesque race of pirates and constituted a great problem for the police.

Loot to the value of seventy-five thousand pounds sterling was the yearly harvest in the days before the organization of the Metropolitan Police. The specialists in waterfront crime, "light horse men" they were called, had a natural ally in the clammy impenetrable fogs that come down like smothering blankets over London.

In the dead of night, doubly dark with fog, rowboats would slink from the shore and steal toward some Indian merchantman laden with bales of silk. On "dog watch" would be some Lascar or Malay, who felt that he had reached a harbor of safety, after the hazards and ardors of a voyage halfway around the world. He would not see the blobs of shadow that crept over the side of the ship. Or perhaps he saw—too late.

A knife would plunge into his heart before he could cry out. Then the shadows would glide about the ship and in the morning there was a dead Lascar discovered and bales of precious cargo missing. Up and down the river similar occurrences would take place, and whatever police existed to protect the harbor could only set down the loss on paper and keep totaling it up.

But one day quiet men in blue rowed out from shore in little dinghies. There was little that was theatrical about them. A blue suit with a few brass buttons and a peaked hat with a silver anchor—these and a quietly puffing pipe were not particularly alarming to a lot of robust river pirates who had been having it all their own way.

But something began to happen. A little band of successful river rats would plan a looting on board a rusty freight tramp steamer. The fog would be all that a Thames pirate could wish. The watch apparently was dozing as expected. Over

the side would steal the four or five experienced looters, their big clasp knives poised and ready for silent work.

Then from behind a pile of bales would come the glare of lanterns and half a dozen men in blue, pistols in hand, would invite the visitors to surrender. The visitors ordinarily refused. Whereupon there would follow a lively exchange of amenities and in a few minutes several beaten, sometimes wounded, river pirates would be on their way in police boats to jail and forced absence from the river.

Year by year the river police lessened the annual tribute London's harbor paid to its river pirates, until from seventy thousand pounds sterling yearly, the losses by theft on the river front came down to a petty two hundred pounds a year. Which, when you try to figure up the wealth that lies on London's water fronts, is like stealing a pinch of dust from the world's greatest gold fields.

The change was not brought about without many a hard and picturesque struggle, both with individual pirates and their gangs. Take the case of Slippery Jack, the last of a line of skilled pirates. He was lithe as a snake and strong as a young bull. The water was home to him. The night was his time of day.

In the particular ratnest he made for himself under some wharf he would prepare for his foray. Stripping stark naked he would smear his whole body with grease, then swim silently to the side of a ship. He could climb anchor chains like a shadow. Between his teeth was a long, razor-like blade with a heavy bone handle, well leaded in the butt.

He knew where loot lay as though he had some sort of divining rod. With his razor-like knife he could slit a bale open and help himself to what he wanted before the watch on deck could make the single round of the deck. If you grappled him with bare hands his greased body would slip out of your hold, and over the side of the ship he would dive headlong into his native Thames and the night.

If you tried to use steel claws he had his swift, wicked knife. Together with his skill and courage, his muscles and his wits went a ratlike knowledge of every hole and hiding place in the maze of London's river front.

There came a night Slippery Jack was looting on board a Ceylon freighter. A confederate in the crew had told him of a lot of opium he could get there. What the confederate did not tell him—because he did not know—was that knocking the watch on the head would not keep three men in blue uniform

from leaping out at Slippery Jack from the dark behind the winches.

Six hands reached for the naked river pirate. But his name was rightly earned. He slipped through their hands and made a clean dive over the rail and into the river. Silently as a water snake he found his way in the dark to the rathole from which he would emerge dressed into the street.

But his eyes like a cat's in the dark told him there was a something waiting for him to emerge. So he slid back into the river and tried another of his favorite hiding places, only to dive back into the river again. One after another of his avenues of escape he found guarded by a man in blue.

And now they came at him. Still naked and his body greased, he jumped into a small rowboat and shot out into the breadth of the Thames, his hands busy with the oars, his long sharp knife between his teeth.

But from both sides of the river there came small dinghies like his own, each rowed by two men in blue. The boats overtook him and ringed him in.

"Be a good boy, Jack, and come along quietly," their captain said. "We don't want to hurt you."

Slippery Jack could see by the light of police lanterns that he and others held pistols in their hands. Standing up in his boat he threw the oars away and with his long, sharp knife tense in his right hand he shouted:

"You're many. You've guns. If you've a drop of sportin' blood in the whole pack of you, get me alive."

Shrewdly he touched the one weak point in them. As police they should not have had any other thought but his capture dead or alive. But they were human enough to admire his pluck and English enough to respond to such a challenge.

So they went at him with only their oars. With a leap he landed in one of the boats, knifed one policeman, overturned the boat, slipped into the water, overturned another boat, slipped out of three pair of hands that seized him and then diving, swam under water so long that the police thought he was drowned.

He had stolen behind one of the boats in the dark and with a surge up over the side, tried to reach the pistol holster of one of the men. But a large bony fist caught him on the point of the jaw neatly and he crashed to the bottom of the boat—unconscious. When he awoke his free life was over.

But river pirates were not the only hard customers the water bobby had to subdue. For with the cargoes from the

seven seas came the sailors that bring them. Lascar and Chinaman, Singalese and Malay, Swede and Yankee, African and Finn, Japanese and Irish, all the different races of the earth with but a single quality in common: toughness of body and of spirit.

Used to grappling with death on the sea and in strange ports, free for a brief spell ashore from work and rough weather, with money in the pocket and a thirst for liquor, in the company of women and fun, and landed in the biggest port in all the world, these sailor men are a problem for the police.

But the bobby of the land and his brother of the Thames slowly, patiently, thoroughly brought law and order into this city jungle. With tales of Limehouse Reach filling my imagination I went down there dressed as a tough citizen, prepared for the worst and feeling correspondingly nervous.

I made myself as inconspicuous as possible as I entered the notorious neighborhood. I tried to make myself still more inconspicuous as I left it again to go to my hotel. For the Limehouse Reach of which I had heard and read proved to be a thing of the past and was now only a district of neat, attractive looking houses where workers live behind white starched little curtains and children play demurely in the streets.

The bobby whom I asked for the location of dangerous resorts tried not to smile and suggested one. But the danger he had in mind was one eminently respectable citizens run in the most sheltered of homes.

"You're in danger of taking a bit too much, for they do have a fine line of bottle goods there, sir," said the bobby.

Beside the task of taming robust humanity the sailor bobby has other duties of bizarre diversity. For instance, on the average of once every three days there come to port in London's river other craft than of wood and iron, weak, unfortunate human vessels, tired of the storms of life and glad to be quit of them, even if it means no more voyaging of any kind.

Most of them come by way of the Bridge of Sighs, which crosses the Thames near the floating police station at Waterloo pier. The pathetic failures of a great city who come to the Thames to be rid of life sometimes succeed and often they do not. When they get the release they seek, the water bobby's arms are often the first friendly support they get—too late.

But sometimes the man in blue in his little dinghy hears a

splash near him. To him it is what the crack of the pistol is to the sprinter—it starts him on a race, a race against death. Half the time the sailor wins and takes out of the water a limp, half-drowned tragic figure, who is dragged back to a life he or she has wearily tried to fling away.

Nor are these duties all. Watching for sailors who try to smuggle contraband ashore; acting as traffic officer for launches, luggers, steamers and dories, men-of-war and pleasure craft; and at times helping the fireboats in their fight against river front fires—these are all part of the water bobby's every day, every night work.

How well he and his brother of the street do that work and how deep they have worked their way into the hearts of the London public was illustrated by a near-accident that occurred, in which a bobby on point duty was almost run down by a taxicab. But instead of arresting the taxi driver the bobby had to defend him. For a crowd of hucksters had gathered around the taxi and tried to manhandle the chauffeur.

"If 'e'd 'ave 'it you, we'd 'a' killed him!" one of the cockneys cried to the policeman.

Which is an instance not of the London of old, but of the bobby of to-day.

CHAPTER V

WEIRD SECRETS

THOSE stairs in Scotland Yard leading to the cellar—I don't suppose that on the sunniest of days they would look in the least cheerful. The day I went down them in the wake of Inspector Hendry, head of Scotland Yard's Criminal Registry Office, there was a yellow fog outside and what little sickly daylight came in at the upper stories of that staircase gave up its ghost as we got down below street level.

Down a draughty, gloomily lighted corridor we went until we came to a double door with neither number nor any other indication on it. Inspector Hendry took out a great old-fashioned iron key and inserted it into the lock. Only with a rusty squeak of protest did that room open and we stepped into its dark interior.

Inspector Hendry struck a match, found hanging an electric bulb or two, turned their stems and a wan yellow light showed me the Black Museum of Scotland Yard. It was a rather exceptional privilege, of course, that had been granted me, this glimpse into what lies behind Scotland Yard's seldom opened doors. But it was a cheerless emotion I felt at the sight of that Black Museum.

Here was a depository of relics of remarkable crimes and their detection; a museum of the dark side of the human soul; history in blood-rusted razors, revolvers and a whole arsenal of other implements of violence; the grimmest, queerest school-room conceivable.

For the Black Museum is used as part of the detective school of Scotland Yard, where young sleuths are told of famous crimes and the manner of their doing, and where the relics of them are shown, that the young sleuths may learn how to right similar wrongdoings. It is being less and less used now.

For as science strides forward criminals too garner its fruit, and as their technique gets more and more modern, these relics of past crimes have little light to give the modern hunter of the modern criminal.

For to-day ten years makes the difference between the modern and the outworn in crime technique. But the spell of that museum and its storied relics was as gripping as if its grisly stories were being reënacted before my eyes.

Irresistibly my eyes went up to several long shelves on which stood what looked like some drab hall of fame, rows of heads in plaster. I asked Inspector Hendry what they represented.

He is a kindly, unassuming figure of a man, a policeman with a scholar's nature, somewhat pale from much bending over books, records and catalogue cards. An uncertain smile touched his lips.

"If you will look at their throats you may guess what they are," he said.

I looked. About the throat of each plaster head was a ring of depression, as though some tight band had been constricted there. Dusty plaster heads of smooth shaven, hard looking faces with sightless eyes—these and that ring about the throat. Suddenly I felt a thrill of horror.

These rings were the impress of what a rope had made about these throats, and the heads were plaster casts taken of men immediately after they had paid the supreme penalty for murder. In the swinging yellow light of the still swinging electric bulbs these pallid busts sent depression into my innermost being.

I turned away my eyes to glass cabinets through the dusty panes of which I could see a great variety of objects, each reposing on a card telling its history, the writing often faded and the cards yellowing. Several cards, however, showed by their comparative whiteness that some crime had made recent history for Scotland Yard.

As I looked more closely at the objects I saw that they were chiefly weapons of assault—razors horribly rusted at the blades; hammers such as a primitive hand would seize for violence; revolvers of all degrees of modernity; meat cleavers that sent a shudder through me; oddly fashioned weapons made specially for some particular crime.

In other glass cases were implements of crime, but free of blood. Here were burglar tools of every kind—jimmies of a hundred patterns; they looked like great can openers with three-foot handles to them, specially made to cut through iron doors as the housewife cuts open a can of salmon; vises and keyhole appliances; glass cutters and pieces of burlap smeared with molasses, with which robbers make their way through jewelry store windows.

Elsewhere were instruments of fraud—the fake wooden leg of the beggar; the dark glasses of the “blind”; the crutches and other paraphernalia of the professional cheats who play on man’s pity. It was all depressing stuff and I gladly turned to what looked like a lottery wheel and a good story. I asked Inspector Hendry what the story was. He smiled.

“It is the only implement of fraud I know that used a monkey as an accomplice,” he told me. “The man who operated it was one of these sharpers who infest country fairs and draw money out of the pockets of yokels by playing on their greed.”

“This man would put up this machine, which is more complicated than it looks. You see each of these spokes stops opposite some number. The owner of the machine would attract a crowd of farm hands about his booth and offer the chance to win a pound sterling for ten pence a try.

“For each tenpence you bought a number as a chance. If the wheel, after being spun, stopped at the number you had bought, you won a pound with your ten-pence. *If it stopped at your number!*” he added with a grin. “This man had several confederates in the crowd who would also ‘buy’ numbers. He saw of course which numbers they ‘bought.’

“Then he would make a speech to the others. ‘Now, ladies and gentlemen, in order that this lottery may be absolutely free of the slightest suspicion of control on my part, I shall not spin the wheel myself, but ask Jocko here to do it. Surely none of you suspect Jocko.’

“Jocko was a little gray monkey with a face like a child, suddenly grown very old, nervous and ingratiating. Nobody could possibly suspect him, and in himself Jocko was infinitely more honest than his master. Jocko would take the wheel and give it a spin. It was not his fault that the winning spoke would almost always stop at some number held by one of the man’s confederates.

“Here, let me show you. Suppose I were the man operating the wheel,” said Inspector Hendry as he took the complicated wheel out of its corner. “And suppose you, as one of my confederates, held the number 15. Now, Jocko,” he addressed an invisible monkey, “spin this wheel for the gentleman.”

Jocko was myself in this case and I whirled the wheel around. Inspector Hendry’s foot imperceptibly pressed on one of a circle of knobs in the pedestal of the machine. Grad-

ually it slowed up and when it stopped the flexible steel pointer on the rim of the wheel caught in Number 15.

"A 'doctored' wheel," Inspector Hendry pointed out. "He could control its stopping with his foot, unseen. And poor Jocko little knew how many trusting simple souls lost money by their faith in his honest little face. But one day one of our detectives who was working on a farm disguised as a stable hand went down to the fair to relax—it was quite trying, the case he was working on.

"As our man, like most of us in Scotland Yard, was first recruited from the farm, he looked the part when he was dressed for it, and he knew how to act. The little band of sharpers spied him and began to play him. He played along, partly in enjoyment of the thought of what they would say if they knew him, and partly because a Scotland Yard man can no more help turning his head to watch a man with a thief's face than he can help turning at the cry of fire.

"He knew it was fraud these men were practicing, but he played the game to see just how they did it. He exonerated Jocko from any guilt in the affair, but studied who the winners were. Then he decided to find out whether they were his accomplices. Suddenly he shook his fist at the man operating the machine and shouted, 'You're not honest, you ain't,' and made as though to attack him.

"As our man was a powerful fellow, more than able to settle with the man at the wheel, three men who had been winning surged forward to their friend's rescue. Our man took a chance and placed them under arrest. Then the fraudulent nature of the wheel was discovered. Jocko, like the rest of the band, is behind bars now, but his cage is a room at the Zoölogical Gardens."

It was a mere crumb of a Scotland Yard case, but it gave me appetite for more. I looked at a round stick of wood tipped with iron points at either end. It was so simple an implement and yet I found its use so hard to guess that I asked for its story.

"This relic," smiled Inspector Hendry—for he seemed to want to make up for the gloom of the place—"teaches one the folly of being economical. Yes, you heard me," he laughed. "You see, the burglar who used this on his jobs specialized in robbing homes while their owners were in.

"It is a strange specialty to develop and it takes a certain type of nerve to practice it. There is, of course, a much greater risk in this kind of robbery, but this man closely figured

on the fact that when people are at home they take less precaution against burglars.

"In addition to the regular tools of his trade, this man carried this stick of wood which you see tipped with iron points. He would steal into the house by a back door, crouch in some shadowy corner of a corridor, and when his chance came would dart into a room where he thought there were valuables.

"To guard against surprise he would close the door and then pressing one of these points into the floor, he would fix the other into the door so that it could not be opened from the outside, unless the spiked stick was removed.

"One day, as he was rifling a cabinet in a West End home, the owner of the home tried to get in, found he could not, knew something was wrong, and running back to his room, came back with a revolver. Meanwhile some one else called up the police. When the door was finally broken in the man had fled through the window. But he had left this stick.

"It was such a highly individual bit of work—for he made a decent haul that time—that we knew he was an old hand at it. So we looked him up in our criminal registry." This is Inspector Hendry's own department. "Searching in the category of daylight robbers, we found a man who had been convicted of having used just that method before.

"Through our cards we also keep as close tab on the movements of professional criminals as we can. We finally located his lodging. Remember, we had as yet no proof of any connection of the man with the crime, for he was an old hand and worked in gloves, leaving no finger-prints.

"Our men waited in the street for him to return, which he did at a respectable hour. When we charged him with the robbery of that West End house he laughed at us. 'You'll have to prove it!' he said. 'I was in Birmingham on that day.'

"But he did not know that we had searched his room and found a chair which had been mended. One of the legs had been taken out and the chair was pieced with a bit of wood. And the missing chair leg, now tipped with iron points, was waiting at Scotland Yard to send him to prison—the only proof we had against him.

"But if he were not so economical and had thrown that chair away—it was a cheap affair, anyway—he would have been a free man to-day. The moral is—what?" Inspector Hendry laughed.

as you see in the photograph, he would loiter in the lobby of one of our big hotels—for his scheme was a regular practice of George's until we stopped it. Let us take the last exploit of his, though he had turned the trick many a time before.

"There arrived at that hotel an American, the salesman for a big shoe firm in Massachusetts. George watched him register, studied the labels on his bags, and did a little discreet inquiring of the clerks until he found the man's business.

"Several days later the American, whose name was Stewart, was stopped on the street before the hotel by a well-dressed stranger who asked him politely where Great Conway Street was. Stewart didn't know, of course, since there is no such street in London. But he recognized the twang and language of a fellow American, furthermore a man from the same part of the country.

"For remember, George Watson is both a good actor and intelligent. But Stewart who is what you Americans call 'hard boiled,' doesn't make acquaintances easily on the street and was about to pass on when George asked him if he knew where the wholesale leather district was. Stewart knew this and told him. George thanked him and left."

Inspector Hendry went on to tell me how that evening, apparently by accident, George Watson met Stewart in the hotel lobby. Like a lonely talkative American George greeted Stewart and exclaimed:

"Gosh darn it, but a stranger does lose lots of time trying to do business in this town. These Britishers are so darn leisurely in their methods it's enough to try a saint. Here was I, trying to place a forty-five thousand dollar order for raw hides—trying to *buy*, mind you—and instead of snatching me up before I'd get away—the way we'd do it in the States—I was sent from one man to another and then had to wait until after lunch before the man I had to see came back."

Stewart nodded. His own experiences were apparently enough like that to help him understand the stranger's feelings. From understanding he unbent enough to respond to talk of the state of the leather market—on which George had been reading up for two days. George finally wound up with an invitation to have a drink with "a lonely fellow American."

Stewart cautiously accepted, but subconsciously he was on guard. George, however, proposed nothing more than bil-

liards and apologized for not playing for stakes higher than a cigar. "Something about gambling that spoils the game for me," he apologized to Stewart.

This kept up several days, the casual friendly meetings, until Stewart decided the man wanted only companionship. As George was an engaging fellow, full of sparkle and good stories, and generous, Stewart was glad to accept him as spare-time companion. So that when one evening George suggested a walk to see Piccadilly, Stewart saw no harm in accepting. They had walked but a short distance when on the sidewalk before them Stewart saw an interesting looking envelope. George at that moment was pointing out the electric signs on the buildings, so it was Stewart who picked up the envelope. He opened it and saw a dozen identical clippings from a newspaper. "They were all copies of the clippings you see on this card," Inspector Hendry said, pointing to the exhibit I was holding.

Stewart read the clipping, while George appeared to do the same over his shoulder. "The lucky dog!" George exclaimed.

"Isn't it just like life to pull such crazy plays! Here are you and I, business men, keen, hard-working, knowing our way about in the world—and if we work a hundred years maybe we won't make much more than this yokel falls into through just sheer dumb luck! And what will he do with the money? Most likely lose it to the first crook who spies him—say, I bet that's the lucky boob himself!"

Stewart looked up and saw a raw-boned, fresh-faced young fellow clad in provincial garb, coming in their direction and looking at the sidewalk for something he seemed to have lost. Bucolic was written all over him. When he came up to them, his eyes lit on the envelope in Stewart's hand.

"Oh, begorra, misther, that's my invelope, that is!" he said. "There isn't much in it except some noosepoiper pieces wid me name on thim!"

He was so red-faced with uneasiness lest Stewart would not believe him and was so tremendously relieved when Stewart handed him the envelope that it was laughable. So that when the ploughboy begged the "gintlemin" to let him express his appreciation by having a drink with him, Stewart was amused and the three went to a pub where the young Irishman said he had found the "foinest whiskey" in the world.

Inspector Hendry went on to tell me circumstantially how

the ploughboy attracted Stewart both with his naïveté and his problems.

"If you think it's only glad I am to get this money of Uncle Tim's, you're wrong!" Peter Sheehan told the other two. "Because it's scared stiff I am to know what I'll do about that sixty thousand dollars I'm supposed to give a lot of poor people I niver heard of. What do I know where to find them. And where are these places, anyhow?"

Stewart told him. "Why don't you go to the organized charities in these cities and have them distribute this money for you?" he added. But the young Irishman shook his head determinedly.

"Charities! Bad cess to them! It's divil a bit the poor love charity. And it's little enough the charities knows who's deservin' poor. All the thievin' poor I ever heard of knew how to get the ear of them as has something to give. And it's the real deservin' poor like Widow Grogan who'd rather starve than ask for alms, them is the poor that never the charities hears of. No, I'll have nothin' to do with charities!"

George Watson had made no suggestion and Stewart had nothing else to offer. Whereupon the Irishman got an inspiration.

"Aren't you gentlemen from America, maybe?" he asked.

The two said they were.

"Well, thin, beggin' your pardon, but if I was to ask to—that is—to help me give out this money right," he suggested timidly.

George Watson shook his head. "I haven't got the time," he said. "I've got all I can do to tend to my business!" Stewart said practically the same.

"Ah, but I mean if I was to pay you well for it!" the Irishman insisted. "An' I could, you know. An' I'd be savin' myself money. It'd cost me like the divil to go to them places and likely as not some thafe would steal the whole of it from me. But if you was to get say five thousand dollars apiece—or seven maybe—wouldn't you do it for me?"

Stewart could see a light of interest kindle in Watson's face. So expressive was it that Stewart could almost read his thought. Watson had no prejudices against organized charity, and there would be nothing in the compact with the young Irishman against his distributing the money through an already established agency. It would take almost no time to make an arrangement of that kind and seven thousand dollars

for so little trouble was not to be despised. Sure enough Watson asked:

"What conditions do you put upon the distributions?"

"Only that me poor uncle's will should be carried out and I get his money without any lawyers' tangling me up an' maybe takin' it away from me?"

"And who's to be the judge whether the distribution was well carried out?" Watson asked.

"Why, you yourself," said the ploughboy.

"Do you mean to say that you won't appoint any one to see whether I distributed that money or not?"

"Sure and if I had to get somebody to watch you I'd get that fellow to do the distributin'!" the ploughboy said.

"Why don't you get your lawyers to do the job?" Stewart put in.

"Because I don't like thim!" the Irishman said, a sullen look in his face. "I might be one of three thafes who was cricified by the way they made me prove who I be. They sint to me home town and asked me master and friends and Paddy's cow and I had to show me mother's marriage lines and what not! No, if I can't get some gintleman like you as isn't a lawyer to distribute this money, why faith I'll do it meself."

"But how do you know you can trust me, Pat?" Watson asked.

"How do I know when rain is comin'? By me eyes."

George Watson actually blushed and so well that Stewart could not help liking him for it. "That's a fine tribute you're paying me, Pat," he said. "I'll do it, but I can't attend to Washington and Birmingham. Too far from my business. I'll take care of Seattle for you and do it for five thousand. If you're willing, we'll draw up a contract to-morrow."

The meaning of a contract had to be explained to Paddy. When he finally understood he exclaimed: "What do I want to be makin' you sign them poipers for, if I trust you already?" Suddenly a look came into his eyes, the same hostile look with which he spoke of his lawyers.

"Oh, I see! It's me you're wantin' to tie up with thim contracts! Mel Well, you needn't bother, thankin' you just the same. It's bad enough havin' to prove my honesty to them lawyers, me that never wished a man wrong or took a ha'penny—Well, gintlemin, thank you for givin' back me press cuttings and I'll be bidding you good night!" He rose in dignified resentment. But Watson stopped him.

"No, no, Paddy, you don't understand. It's only that I am used to business methods. And I want you to have a hold on me whether you trust me or not. As for me, I'd trust you with my last cent!"

Stewart understood Watson's anxiety. But Paddy was still hurt and was with difficulty kept from leaving. "Look here, Paddy!" Watson exclaimed at last. "If you don't believe I trust you, I'll prove it to you." He took out a fat important looking wallet with money, bills and papers showing. "I'll trust you to take this wallet and walk around the block with it and bring it back to me here!"

Paddy looked up eagerly and took up the wallet. "You mean it!" he asked. Watson hesitated, then nodded.

Paddy took the wallet and went to the door with it. "It's the last you'll see of me!" he said with a smile and left the room.

Watson seemed uneasy. "It's a gamble of course," he remarked to Stewart, "and I almost always lose in a gamble. But if I have made a mistake in that fellow, there's no trusting anybody on earth! That chance of making seven thousand dollars was so tempting—"

The door opened and Paddy came in. There were tears in his eyes, as he gave Watson back his wallet, untouched as to contents. "What do you think of him trustin' me, a man he'd never clapped eyes on before. God bless you, sir!"

"And it's eight thousand dollars I'll pay for the job in Se—Seattle or whatever the devil that place is! Eight thousand and not a cent less! There isn't another man in the world who'd do what you just done."

Watson blushed and exclaimed, "Nonsense! Anybody would trust you, Paddy!"

As Inspector Hendry told me the story so far, I imagined myself in Stewart's place, and hard-boiled as Stewart may have been, I was not surprised to hear that he exclaimed.

"I'd do it myself, Paddy!" With that he put his own wallet on the table. "Take your walk around the block with it if you want me to help you with Washington and Birmingham."

Paddy choked with emotion, but took the "walk around the block" with Stewart's wallet. It must have been an endless block, for he never came back.

"After half an hour of anxious waiting Watson seemed more disturbed than Stewart about the matter," Inspector Hendry commented. "Good God, why did he pick on you

instead of me!' he cried repeatedly. Finally, he said, 'There's no use waiting any further! One of us must wait here in case he should chance to really come back. I'll go out and see if I can find him. If not I'll get the police on the job!'

Stewart rose and put his hand on Watson's shoulder.

"Don't bother going to look for police," he said quietly, but in a startlingly changed manner. "I'm a Scotland Yard man myself. One of my friends has probably taken Paddy down to the Yard by now. Let's go and join them there!"

"For you see," Inspector Hendry concluded, "George had been playing his game so often and so successfully that complaints finally came in and we got on his trail. The man who played 'Stewart' was I. That's how George and I became such good friends," he chuckled.

In a corner of a cabinet I saw an old-fashioned "dark lantern," such as children used to fasten on the front of bicycles. It looked so strange among that collection of crime relics that I felt there was another good story in it. There was. It can be considered a symbol and a tribute to the dogged patience and impressive skill of Scotland Yard in tracking criminals.

Smithers was for many years a receiver of stolen goods and got rich by it. But the richer he got the more uneasy he became, lest some day one of his customers would find out how rich he was and rob him.

So he gave up business, found a small house for himself in a quiet part of the city and fitted it up with the most modern burglar alarms. Also—for he knew something of the way burglars work—he arranged things so that if some one cut the wire of a burglar alarm, the loosened wire would be dragged down by an invisible leaden weight, which would then drop on a cartridge and explode it.

But one day the bobby on the beat saw that the milk and groceries left before Smither's door were not taken in. He investigated and no one answered his bell. Knowing that the old man never left his home so early—bobbies learn to know the habits of residents on their beats—he took a chance, had the locks picked and entered the house. Smithers was found murdered and his strong-box had been rifled.

A pad of felt had kept the cut burglar alarm from exploding and the criminals had escaped and with hardly a trace—except for the child's lantern I saw in the Black Museum. As was to be expected, those who did the job were too experienced to leave finger-prints or any other clues behind, except

that child's toy, which they probably abandoned contemptuously.

Scotland Yard went to work on it characteristically. A staff of detectives was given the task of visiting all the manufacturers of such lanterns, all stores that sold them, and of finding out in what kind of neighborhoods children still played with such old lanterns.

In this tedious task the teamwork of Scotland Yard and its infinite patience were thoroughly tested. Finally several of the poorer but most populous sections of London were arrived at as the most promising hunting grounds.

A simple plan was devised for the next phase of the hunt. A policeman who had a seven-year-old son was assigned to one of these sections of the city. The boy was given the lantern the burglars had left behind them and was told to play with it, while his father patrolled the beat in the vicinity to see what happened. For a week nothing happened and father and son were told to take up another beat, next to it.

The son, by the way, did not know why he was told to play with the lantern, but as playing was not a hard job, he did it. The second attempt brought no greater yield than the first, nor did the third, fourth or tenth. It began to look as if nothing would come of it all. But Scotland Yard kept doggedly at work.

Then one day a little boy from the tenement section where the policeman's son was playing with the lantern, drew near and looked closely at it. Then he set up a wail:

"I want my lantern!"

"It ain't your lantern!" said the other.

"Yes, it is, I know it is!"

The bobby drew near. "Are you sure, sonny?" he asked kindly. "My son has had this lantern for weeks."

"I'll prove it," the little boy answered. "When the wick burned out I cut off a piece of my sister's old flannel petticoat for a new wick."

The lantern had such a wick. But the policeman said:

"I'll have to ask your mother if you're a truthful boy."

The three went to the boy's mother, a widow who kept boarders. She was proved to be a decent, hard-working woman and the lantern was returned to her son. But Scotland Yard men could find out nothing more than that the boy missed his lantern some months before.

"So many of my boarders come and go that I can't keep track of who took the toy," she told the detectives. But after

much effort she finally remembered that at about that time two young men, friends, one an electrician, the other a plumber, moved away from her boarding house together.

Then followed another weary hunt, through records at Scotland Yard, records this time for electricians and plumbers who used their trades as cover for burglary. Scores of these were found and the whereabouts of each was run down. The mere statement of this gives no idea of the tedious, persistent work it took to find two of these men who were secretly identified by the landlady of the boarding house.

As the police had no proof against these men they were kept under surveillance. In this way it was learned that one of the men had worked on a plumbing job in Smither's house, the other on the electrical wiring there. In the room of the electrician was found a revolver of exceptionally large caliber—and it was a bullet of very large caliber that was found in Smither's brain.

From then on the hunt became hotter, until one day the men from Scotland Yard found out enough. In the dead of night they descended on the two and arrested them.

And on the shelf with those pallid busts I saw in the Black Museum were two heads with the marks of the hangman's noose about the throats. They belong with that other relic I saw in the Black Museum, the child's lantern.

Soon after I left that dismal museum it was broken up and scattered. But in my memory it stays whole—and often I wish I could forget it.

CHAPTER VI

THE DEALER IN DEATHS

LET us consider for a moment the crack express train of a great railroad as it shoots past us with the roar of a great projectile and almost its speed. There at its head is its mighty engine, a huge steel shell with terrifying power imprisoned within, power enough to whip in its wake a long train of cars as easily as a boy wields the lash on his toy whip.

So long as that express train keeps on its appointed track it carries swiftly its priceless freight of human beings, men of affairs, their wives and children, to their wanted destination. It is a giant harnessed to beneficent service.

But now let even a small rock find itself on the rails. The great shining wheels of the locomotive strike it, and the engine is deflected from its path a mere matter of inches, that's all. And the very fury of power which an instant before was working in the service of its passengers now hurls them to destruction and death.

Not unlike this is the lust of power. One man it drives on to build cities in the wilderness, to invent benefactions for countless thousands, perhaps to found a great empire. In another man some tiny clot of blood, perhaps some kink in the filament of nerve too minute even for the microscope to spy, will do to that same passion for power what the small rock on the railroad track did to our express engine.

Instead of helping human beings, such a man will exert his power to killing them, and try to evade punishment that he may kill again. It is of such a perverted power and of a fine bit of Scotland Yard detective work that I propose to tell here.

In the early 1890's through the half-world of London, that pathetic community where joy is nominally supposed to be the daily fare, but where actually there is little more than sordid, paid-for "pleasure," there ran the whisper of some nameless, indescribable, unformed terror. What was the nature of this fear, where and when it first drew breath, none of the pathetic victims of our social system in that part of

London could tell; although it was into their hearts that this terror had struck.

Death alone would not have frightened them so. For among those who follow "a short life and a merry one," death in its familiar forms is soon forgotten by the survivors. But what sent fear fluttering through the hearts of the women in that section of London was the suddenness with which death had lighted on this or that one of their friends, after first visiting an appalling cruelty of suffering on each. And worst of all, was the utter inability of anybody to explain what had started this grisly terror on its promenade in their midst.

There was, for example, Ellen Donworth. Of her it could be said in more senses than one that she was a daughter of joy. Large, strong, red of hair, and fair of skin, with a dancing light in her big eyes and a robust spirit in her voice and every movement, she seemed to be the last one whom death would invite for a companion. Indeed, on a certain day she had said to her dearest friend:

"Death is a cripple. He'll have to wait till I am one myself before he catches up to me!"

Less than twenty-four hours later, her friend found the young woman contorted in agony. She lived long enough to taste some of the most concentrated torture that human flesh can know. Death must have come as a merciful release. Her few friends, women of the half-world, were appalled at the suddenness, the violence and the mystery of the happening.

So little was known as to what had brought it about that an inquest was held. Unmistakably there were signs of strychnine poisoning. The authorities, hearing not the slightest whisper of suspicion that there was anyone to wish Ellen ill, put down the cause of her death as suicide. You see, Ellen was not of the class considered socially important enough to create that sensation in the newspapers which spurs authorities to more perfunctory efforts.

But Ellen's few friends shook their heads at the coroner's verdict. Ellen was not the kind to kill herself. There had been little in life which she had not accepted with a light shrug of her strong shoulders. Certainly nothing had happened of late to make her strong will to live turn on her and send her to death by her own hand. Her friends tried to find some explanation other than the coroner's. But when no other solution was found they began to think that perhaps the state and its experts knew better than they; and the vital Ellen began to fade even as a memory.

Then just as they had almost forgotten Ellen, their attention was startled by the case of Matilda Clover. "Sparkling Tillie" she was called, a laughing imp of a girl, and fond of wine. One night her friends found her in convulsions. A local doctor was called and came barely in time to see her die. She was not an important patient and he was not an exceptionally good doctor. It looked to him as though it was a case of delirium tremens; and the authorities accepted his verdict without looking any more deeply into the matter.

But again the half-world refused to take the official verdict as truth. Tillie's friends did not deny that she loved wine. But between loving it as Tillie had, and dying of it as swiftly and with the agony they had seen her in, there was a difference her friends could not explain to themselves. The more they thought of it and talked about it the less they understood it. Only of one thing were they certain; the doctor's story of her death did not satisfy them; any more than the coroner's verdict in the case of Ellen Donworth.

Then some one mentioned the fact that Ellen Donworth's death was as strange as Tillie's. Yes, they instantly agreed, it was. And they looked wonderingly at one another.

Before they could forget Tillie's death their wonder took on the added aspect of fear. For now two more of their friends, Alice Marsh and Emma Shrivell gave them something to think about. The two girls on a free evening had gone to theater together. Then going back to their rooms they felt that no such evening was complete without an after-theater supper. So they sent out for some beer, opened a can of salmon, and pretended they were having a gay time of it.

Several hours later both girls were stricken violently ill; went into convulsions, and after a mercifully short period, died. A doctor casting about for a probable cause of their deaths saw the empty can of salmon and decided on ptomaine poisoning, which, as the whole world knows, sometimes follows the eating of canned foods.

The doctor's certificate might have been accepted by the authorities as final. But now in the already frightened dovecotes of the half-world there arose such a clamor of terror that the police could not fail to hear of it. First Ellen Donworth, then Matilda Clover; now Alice Marsh and Emma Shrivell, all dying suddenly, violently, and within so short a period—the half superstitious, half intuitive terror of their friends made itself heard. "There is something wrong here!

Something's up! You can't tell us all these girls dying is just accident!"

So for the first time the authorities listened to the panic-stricken half-world and decided to see if there was anything substantial behind their terror. Scotland Yard got to work.

Once the minute scrutiny of that organization was fully bent on the case, it brought forth within twenty-four hours its first discovery. There had been a man who had partaken of the after-theater supper of Alice Marsh and Emma Shrivell; a man with glasses and thick mustaches. The girls had spoken of him as some one they had met a few days before in a casual street contact and they could tell little more about him than that he seemed to be a kindly acquaintance who was as willing to treat as he was to accept treats.

A fellow lodger in their house told the police he remembered seeing this man leave the house some hours before the girls were stricken. And a policeman, one of London's famous "bobbies," also had seen a man, answering to that description, leaving the house at the time indicated by the lodger. The policeman who saw this man, had no reason to note him at the time other than the comparative lateness of the hour. But with that alertness which has made the London police probably the best in the world, this "bobbie" had made a mental note of the man.

Scotland Yard in its investigation soon came upon this mental note of the policeman and decided to make full use of it. The bobbie was put into plain clothes and sent out to search London for a man with glasses and thick mustaches. It seemed like looking for the proverbial needle in the haystack. London's millions are an endless procession, constantly shifting; and the policeman's job was to search among them for a single face, with no other help than the momentary picture flashed on a crowded memory in the light of a street lamp. But that policeman had in him the first and last qualities of a Scotland Yard man, dogged patience and perseverance.

Meanwhile Sir William Broadbent, a well-known physician, had received a letter from an unknown who signed himself, "M. Malone." The letter accused the physician of having administered to Matilda Clover medicine with strychnine in it with the deliberate intention of killing her. Unless the doctor wished the police to have the evidence of this crime, which "M. Malone" claimed exclusively to possess, the doctor was

advised to deliver two thousand, five hundred pounds sterling according to detailed directions included in the letter.

Sir William Broadbent handed the letter over to Scotland Yard where it was examined and considered. The whole thing was so preposterous that the letter was filed along with the hundreds of other letters from cranks which are referred daily to Scotland Yard.

A little while later Mr. Frederick Smith, member of the well-known firm of booksellers, William H. Smith & Son, also had received a peculiar letter which charged him with having poisoned with strychnine Ellen Donworth, the red-haired girl whose death was the first to frighten the girls of London's half-world. This letter too, was sent to Scotland Yard where it was compared with that sent to Sir William Broadbent. The handwriting in the one was markedly different from the other; but the two letters were put together in the same envelope or *dossier* bearing on the deaths of the four girls.

All this time our bobby in plain clothes was roaming London in search for a man with glasses and thick mustaches. He saw hundreds of such. But none of them touched the nerve in his memory until late one evening he caught a glimpse of a man under the light of a street lamp; then, glasses, thick mustaches, and the rest of the details sprang into the bobbie's consciousness the moment he laid eyes on this stranger.

Quietly, skillfully, the policeman in plain clothes followed in the wake of this man until he saw him enter a house. Then he made discreet inquiry and learned that the man was a physician, Dr. Neil Cream, who had a modest practice in a shabby district of London.

It will be remembered that a lodger in the house where the two girls, Alice Marsh and Emma Shrivell died so violently and mysteriously, had also seen a man with glasses and thick mustaches leave the house on the night of their deaths. This lodger was taken by a bobbie to a place near the house of Dr. Neil Cream, where the two waited for the man to come out. From across the street they watched. When the physician had passed out of sight the bobbie asked the lodger:

"Was that the man you saw?"

The lodger rubbed his chin perplexedly. "I—don't know. In some ways he looks like him, and then again he doesn't."

It was an exceedingly slender basis on which to continue an investigation; but Scotland Yard is famous for its respect for trifles and its ability to "carry on" with very little.

It was on just as slight a basis that at Scotland Yard itself,

the authorities decided to take another look at the crank letters received by Sir William Broadbent and Mr. Frederick Smith. It was then noted that the letter accused Sir William Broadbent of having poisoned Matilda Clover with strychnine.

But the doctor in the case had put down the cause of the death as delirium tremens. If the crank letter proved on investigation to be merely a crank letter, why, as the English put it, "that was that." It cost Scotland Yard nothing more than patience, trouble and money to look into it; and Scotland Yard rarely stints itself.

So merely to check up on a crank's letter the body of Matilda Clover was disinterred. The contents of the stomach were put through a chemical analysis. And strychnine was discovered.

Now the death certificate said, "delirium tremens," following the diagnosis of the doctor called in. The crank letter said strychnine. The chemical analysis, therefore, showed that the writer of the letter knew more about the cause of Matilda Clover's death than either the physician or the official records did.

The famous criminal hunting organization now turned with double interest to Dr. Neil Cream, slight as was the basis for suspecting him. The physician, of course, had not the least idea that he was being so closely observed; at least he didn't know it at first.

But now Scotland Yard staged a queer little game for his benefit. The man put in more time traveling as a salesman for an American drug firm than as a physician. He now began to find strange men staring at him, often following him, and slinking away reluctantly when he turned to look at them. At first he told himself it was only his imagination. But they began to appear too often for him to explain away easily. They were the heavily built policeman type, the kind who almost burlesqued themselves, so obviously were they policemen.

They scowled at him when they thought he was not observing, they bent heavy looks of suspicion upon him, they dogged his steps everywhere. Increasingly it made the man nervous. He took to trying to dodge them. But as fast as he escaped one of these shadowers another took up the trail.

One evening when his nerves were particularly on edge and haunted by all this, he went into a public house and ordered a stiff drink. A man sat down by his table. In contrast to the strangers who had been haunting him, this man was the

kind of comfortable, solid, understanding human being in whose presence figments of imagination lose their nightmare character and everything takes its place in a common-sense, well ordered, work-a-day world.

"You seem to be on edge to-night," he said to Dr. Cream. "Nothing is worth feeling fussed over. Down with another hot toddy and you'll find your ghosts, whatever they are, running away from you, tails between their legs."

"Is that so!" sneered Dr. Cream. "Will ten hot toddies make that big brute leaning against the bar and sneaking a look at me every time he thinks I'm not watching—will hot toddies make him disappear?"

"Why?" asked the stranger sympathetically. "Who is he?"

"I don't know who he is. Any more than I know who twenty others like him are. All I know is that wherever I go those brutes are on my heels, following me, skulking in corners, dogging my steps. It's enough to drive a man mad!"

The sympathetic stranger arose. "I've come across nuisances like that myself. I don't know what they're up to, but I do know how to deal with them. With your permission I'm going over to that man and talk to him. The things I'll say won't make pleasant hearing, and if he wants to mix it up with me, I'll be glad to step outside with him. But I think from what I know of his kind, he'll be satisfied to get out and stay away from you, him and his pals!"

To Dr. Cream's gratification the big affable stranger walked over to the lowering fellow at the bar and appeared to be expressing himself to him in no gentle terms. At the end of an emphatic speech the man at the bar sullenly turned and left, while the affable stranger came back and sat down with Dr. Cream.

"I don't think you'll find *him* bothering you any more."

"Much obliged to you, I'm sure," Dr. Cream exclaimed warmly. "I wish you could dispose of the others like that."

"That's not a hard job," the affable stranger smiled. "My name is Hendricks. I rather like you, and don't mind seeing more of you. What's your name?"

"Dr. Cream. And I'm sure I'll be glad to have you along, if you can chase the others as you did this one."

They struck up a congenial acquaintance that fast developed into companionship. Dr. Cream seemed to lead a lonely sort of life and was exceedingly fond of talking. Hendricks was

a good listener. Better than that, he made good on his promise to relieve Dr. Cream of the strangers who dogged the physician's footsteps. On several occasions Hendricks repeated this performance of the public bar; and after that Dr. Cream was no longer troubled.

The physician was so greatly relieved that he began to confide in Hendricks. Of his personal affairs he told him only the business he was engaged in, as part salesman and part physician, and the fact that he was engaged to a young woman in Canada. Beyond that, great though seemed the man's need for talking, he told Hendricks nothing about himself.

Several times Hendricks broadly hinted that it was time Dr. Cream showed himself hospitable enough to invite him to his lodgings. But each time the physician changed the talk and Hendricks had to content himself with meeting him in public houses.

Meanwhile up at Scotland Yard the handwriting experts were trying to find factors in common between the blackmailing letters sent to Sir William Broadbent and Mr. Frederick Smith. The handwriting in the letters led them nowhere, as the two specimens were too dissimilar in character.

But when the experts held up to the light the sheets on which these letters were written, they found a water-mark in common. Faintly showing in each sheet the words "Fairford Superfine."

Then ensued one of those tedious searches which make up the backbone of most detective work; unromantic canvassing of scores and hundreds and thousands of factories and shops which, mountains in labor, often produce a mere mouse; but Scotland Yard feels itself well repaid when it gets as little out of the search as even a small mouse of a clew.

The search for the makers of "Fairford Superfine" paper was a long one and had to cross into Canada before it ended in success. Success in this case meant only that the manufacturers of the paper were found, and from them it was learned that none of their stationery was sold in England. This would not appear to have been a helpful discovery to make.

But now Hendricks, who had not been able to gain access to Dr. Cream's room, wrote a letter addressed to the physician. He wrote in the name of a wholesale drug house—he had sent for one of its letter-heads—and asked Dr. Cream about some of the goods he was selling. The tenor of the letter was

such as to make the man who got it, believe that a large order was sure to follow a favorable reply. The letter was signed "G. N. Mulford, General Manager."

Several days later the real G. N. Mulford in Glasgow received a reply from Dr. Cream. This letter he carefully sealed in an envelope and sent by registered mail on to Scotland Yard.

The day after the arrival of this letter, the postman who collected the mail at the letterbox nearest the home of Dr. Cream, instead of taking the mail thus collected to the post office, brought it down to Scotland Yard. One letter addressed to a young woman in Canada bore the same handwriting as the letter from Dr. Cream forwarded to Scotland Yard by Mulford.

Both letters were held up to the light and in both appeared the water-mark, "Fairford Superfine."

About this time a girl who went under the name of Lou Harvey was taking a walk one semifoggy night along the Embankment. She was a flirtatious lass, and when a rather polished gentleman with glasses and waxed mustaches politely raised his silk hat and asked her a civil question as to some address, she cordially responded. The stranger lost his interest in the address and invited the girl to a music hall. After theater they had a bite together at a restaurant. It was then that the man said:

"Look here, my girl, have you had that rash on your forehead long?"

"Oh, it comes and goes," she replied frowning; "it's an awful nuisance. I don't know what to do about it."

"I do," he said. "You see, I'm a physician, and I have some pills which will put an end to that nuisance, if you take them. If you stop by my lodgings now I will bring them out to you."

At his lodgings the man invited the girl in, but she declined. She accepted, however, his gift of some long pills, which he assured her, would cure the rash on her forehead. "Take them now," he urged; "the sooner, the better."

"No, I'll wait until I get home," she replied, and left him.

His eyes followed her as though reluctant to lose sight of her.

Lou Harvey had been reading the newspapers and had discussed with many of her friends the epidemic of sudden and violent deaths in London's half-world. She became suspicious, therefore, of any medicines so kindly donated to her by a

stranger. Her first step after leaving the man, was to go down to Scotland Yard and tell her story.

The pills were taken to the chemical laboratory at the Yard and at once analyzed.

Enough strychnine was found to have killed the girl had she taken the pills.

Dr. Neil Cream was in his room writing a letter when there came a knock on the door. It was so late at night that at first he decided not to admit any one. But the knocking increased. Dr. Cream pondered for some moments more, then he went to a clothes closet and took out a heavy walking stick. The tip of it was of iron. In the core of the cane was lead. Placing the cane in a position where he could seize it handily, he walked to the door and called out:

"Who's there?"

"It's me, Hendricks! I've lost the key to my lodgings and haven't a place to lay my head to-night, if you don't put me up. I know it's intruding, but I thought you might feel friendly enough after all I've done for you to put me up for the night."

Dr. Cream paused long. "I haven't any accommodations for you," he said.

"Well, look here," Hendrick's voice rose angrily. "I've had just enough drinks to help me talk freely. I think you owe me a bit of hospitality after what I've done for you, and I'm going to keep hammering at the door and raising the devil until I get the whole neighborhood awake. Then I'll let them know what I think of you!"

Evidently Dr. Cream did not want the neighborhood gathered about him, while an angry drunkard expressed opinions of him. The physician unlocked the door and admitted Hendricks. In the latter's expression Dr. Cream saw a different character than the one he had been familiar with. It was the face of an agent of the law.

Cream hurried into the living room and, as though without thinking laid his hand on the heavily loaded walking stick. Hendricks came slowly up to him. Cream raised the stick, as though he were only looking at the ferrule. But it was in a position from which he could strike Hendricks at the slightest suspicion of the other. Dr. Cream was, in addition, a powerfully built man and a blow from him with such a stick, if it reached its mark, would be a serious matter.

Hendricks glowered at him. "I've a good mind to give you a beating," he growled. He was equal to the physician physi-

cally. "And if you don't put that stick down, I'll sail in and do it."

He had nothing but his two fists wherewith to make his threat good. And into Dr. Cream's eyes there now showed a steady glitter, the look of the aroused killer. The hour was late, the city about them seemed fast asleep.

Hendricks read the look and stepped back. Dr. Cream, as though he had tasted blood, advanced upon him and up went the stick. The next instant it swished down viciously—but not on Hendricks's head. For at the very moment that Cream struck at him, the other sent a small table sliding at the doctor with such force that it caught him in the thighs and spoiled the aim. Before he could recover, a powerful fist crashed to the point of his jaw and the physician went to the floor down and out.

In a few moments Hendricks had his hands fastened with steel links. Then he went to the door and admitted four other Scotland Yard men.

In the inside pocket of Dr. Cream's vest was found a little red memorandum book. On the fly leaf was the following brief, but terrible diary:

October	13, 1891—Ellen Donworth.
October	20, 1891—Matilda Clover.
November	23, 1891—Jennie Geller.
April	22, 1892—Alice Marsh and Emma Shrivell.
June	12, 1892—Lou Harvey.

There were other names on this roll, some antedating the death of Ellen Donworth; three of them apparently entered in America.

At the trial of Dr. Cream the evidence produced was, of course, circumstantial in character. He was tried for the murder of Matilda Clover, "and other persons." It may surprise the reader to be told that the prosecution was not having an exceedingly easy time of it. It is true there was the evidence of such damaging nature, as the fact of the handwriting and watermarks on the anonymous letters; the further fact that it was one of these letters which led to the *post mortem* discovery of strychnine in Matilda Clover's stomach.

Then there was the identification of Dr. Neil Cream by the bobbie who saw him leave the house in which two of the girls died; there was, in addition, other evidence. But a British jury in particular, demands overwhelming proof before it is willing to condemn a man to death. And the trial was going

so poorly for the prosecution that Dr. Cream came back to his cell one day dancing and singing with joy.

But next morning he received a shock in court. The clerk arose to call the next witness.

"Lou Harvey!"

A girl came forward and stepped into the witness box. The doctor leaped to his feet, as though he was looking at the dead. And indeed, to him, she was some one who had risen from the dead.

It was Lou Harvey's testimony that helped send Dr. Neil Cream to the gallows.

This story was put at my disposal by Inspector John Hendry, head of the Criminal Registry Office, in his document room at New Scotland Yard. We had finished looking at the pile of records, photographs, and detective diaries from which he had been refreshing his excellent memory of the case, and as he put them back into the filing cabinet, he said:

"I hold no brief for capital punishment. But here is something for you to consider. Dr. Cream had been in America. He had been tried for the murder of three girls in just such a manner as in England. For some reason, although found guilty, he was given only a life sentence. By good behavior he had that commuted to ten years. In time he left prison a free man—a leniency which cost the lives of at least five English girls.

"He was a man consumed with the lust of power. Complicated with it was a degenerate lust. But it was his craving for power that made him the monster that he was. He had no abilities of any kind, so could not put that lust for power to work constructively.

"Whereupon it became deflected and perfected and gave him satisfaction through his power to snuff out the lives of unfortunate women. He was really a case for doctors, psychiatrists, and perhaps, institutions for the insane, except that in his ability to 'get away with murder'—what grim meaning your American slang sometimes takes on—he showed what amounts to artistry in the domain of crime."

CHAPTER VII

THE BOY TERROR OF PARIS

IT takes only fifteen short minutes to fly from England across the Channel to France. But to the criminal flying before the hunting pack of Scotland Yard those fifteen minutes must bring a vivid change.

It must be something like the difference between being hunted by plodding, unremitting, sure-scented bloodhounds on the one hand and on the other hand being potted at by marksmen who shoot without seeing their quarry, but take aim by brilliant calculation. Nine times out of ten the shot may go wide. But the tenth goes through the heart.

Part of the difference between Scotland Yard and the police of Paris is due to temperamental differences between the two most unlike neighbors in the world, the English and the French. And partly the difference in the hunting tactics of the two detective systems is due to the difference in the game they hunt.

It is one thing to figure by triangulation where an approaching, but as yet invisible warship will be at a given moment and by calculation shoot at it; and it is quite another thing to try the same thing with a darting, swerving, dizzily twisting airplane equipped with dynamite darts and piloted by a daredevil afire with recklessness and imagination.

It is not for nothing, therefore, that in modern fiction the greatest detective is an Englishman and the most brilliant criminals are French.

It is only natural that Scotland Yard, the greatest criminal hunting organization in the world, should inspire the creation of Sherlock Holmes; and that French writers, from Le Blanc, Gaboriau, Eugene Sue and Dumas to Victor Hugo should have been inspired by the vivid imagination and daring of the French criminal. And it is these qualities that make up the problem for the Paris police.

To bring this out clearly, let us consider Tête d'Or, a golden-headed twelve-year-old Paris pickpocket. It is worth while going into the youngster's early life somewhat, partly for the

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good story it makes, partly to illustrate what the police of Paris have to contend with.

The father of Tête d'Or was Duchesne, a pickpocket, who followed or rather traveled with a French circus. Here he met and loved a pretty and vivacious circus rider, Vivienne Lechamp. Both were mere youngsters, took life merrily, had not much sense of responsibility and were but little sobered by the coming of their child, the little villain of this story.

His hair of spun gold and his angelic expression gave little Pierre Duchesne his nickname, wherever he went, through life. A wiry, sharp-witted, heartless little devil he grew up in the traveling circus and absorbed its qualities as a monkey absorbs tricks. He was always smaller and younger looking than his age, which made his exceptional intelligence and keenness all the more startling.

He learned all about animals and their tricks and copied unconsciously the furtiveness and swiftness of the great cats in the cages. He even learned to tease them and snatch his little hand a fraction of an inch from the outlash of steel claws.

From this he progressed to teasing the circus hands who were helpless against the fleet-footed midget who shot through mazes of circus wagons and tangles of ropes as smoothly as a fish glides through water. He would dive between the legs of an infuriated tent striker and bound off like a rubber ball.

He could make leaps almost like the trapeze performers. He could writhe out of a strong man's fingers like an eel. And so clever were his escapes that it was hard to bear him grudges which gave the youngster all the more confidence in his wits and in his heels.

His mother, who took her responsibility as a parent more lightly than a child takes its emotion toward a doll, had good times with her Tête d'Or. Her own hair of gold was the source of most of the fun. She would throw it over her face and the youngster could see nothing but a screen of hair.

At first it frightened him; then it got him interested. He, too, wanted to hide his face with his hair, and, so to speak, disappear in a twinkling. As he had inherited his golden, shaggy head from his mother, it was not hard for her to teach the youngster the trick which he used a few years later in Paris to such good effect—for himself.

Or she would dress her hair in any number of ways, each so different and producing such startling changes that there seemed to be a different person with each change. This,

too, Tête d'Or learned to do with his own hair; and later used it on a baffled public in Paris streets.

His father also liked to play with the youngster. One day he tossed up and down a golden twenty-franc piece until Tête d'Or, whose sharp green eyes always lit up greedily at the sight of money, clamored for it. Duchesne handed it over without fuss to the boy's surprise, who rather expected a licking instead.

"Put it into your pocket," his father said with a sly smile, "or somebody will take it away from you."

Tête d'Or shoved the gold coin deep into the pocket of his smock, a crafty grin on his angelic countenance.

"Huh, I'd like to see anybody take it from me," he grunted.

His father mussed his son's golden hair playfully, and gave him a friendly pat or two. Then he said:

"Careless youngster, you've already lost that 'louis.'"

"I did not!" exclaimed Tête d'Or indignantly. But his father smilingly held up the coin between the clever fingers which had just picked the boy's pocket. The youngster stared, startled, outraged, fascinated. How had that miracle happened? He clamored for the coin again; got it easily; and as easily it became again prey to his father's deft fingers. Tête d'Or asked how his father had done the trick.

"I'll show you," his father said. "But if you hope to keep the coin, you'll have to learn how to do it yourself."

Whereupon the pickpocket took his son's own clever fingers between his and taught him how to keep them limber, sensitive and deft; how to slip them into a pocket unfelt and unseen; how to steal them out again with loot between them. He had him practice first on himself; then on his mother—to the huge amusement of both parents. Then he taught him to do it on the others in the circus, but the others saw nothing in it to be amused at, though many of them admired the little fellow's devilish skill in his new tricks.

A new world opened to Tête d'Or. He used to watch with envy the children of townspeople flock into the circus, their pockets stuffed with bonbons their parents had bought them, with small coins given them to spend, with personal treasures which boys would consider worth showing off even at a circus. Tête d'Or would regard these with envy.

Now he looked at them with craft in his eyes. He would mingle with the children in the entering crowds or when they left after the performance. That night in many a home there

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went up the wail of youngsters who had lost some treasure or other from their pockets and did not in the least know how they came to lose something they had guarded so carefully.

Then when Tête d'Or was ten years old came the terrible end to his life with the circus. One night while the circus was playing in a suburb of Paris, Tête d'Or's father came back late to the van in which he, his wife and child lived. He was heavy with drink. His wife and Tête d'Or, somewhat used to his coming home late and in this condition, undoubtedly slept on.

Duchesne must have gone on smoking after he got into bed. For the wagon caught fire, an overturned kerosene lantern furiously fed the flames—and when it was all over Duchesne and his wife were no more. But from the burning ruins of the circus van there crept a blackened little figure, as miraculously escaped from the clutches of fire as he so often escaped from every other clutch.

The orphan was not popular enough for any one in the circus to adopt him. So the authorities were notified and a local orphan asylum sent a man to collect the youngster. I think the word collect describes it. For Tête d'Or decided that he did not want to go with the orphan asylum man. He wanted to remain with the circus.

So for the next two hours he roamed all over the place—under wagons, on top of animal cages, in with the hyenas, huddled inside a box not much bigger than a satchel, and wound up by clambering up the side of the big tent and perching on top of the center pole.

It took most of the circus hands two hours to lay their hands on him for good. He was then trussed up like a calf, feet bound, thrown into a wagon and carted off to the orphanage.

With this experience in mind the orphanage authorities kept a close watch over Tête d'Or. It was clear from the start that there would be little love lost between the orphanage and Tête d'Or. The other children soon began missing their pathetic little treasures and a search of Tête d'Or's bed revealed most of them hidden there.

Tête d'Or was given a beating by the head of the dormitory. Whereupon he reciprocated by kicking the man's shins black and blue, slipped out of his grasp, doubled down the hall and made for liberty. He was running head down like a butting goat and much fleeter, when his head buried itself in the waistline of a corpulent attendant. After the shock and

explosion that followed Tête d'Or was locked up in a dark room on bread and water.

But in his circus existence he had never experienced walls he could not tear, break or dig through. So he pounded at the plaster until he found a spot that thudded hollow and kicked away at this till a small hole appeared. It was all he needed.

The children of the orphanage were in the big yard at formal drill; but their minds were agog at the new boy who was creating such a furor in the institution. Now, however, he had met his fate, bread and water in the dreaded dark room.

So agitated were they that in spite of strict orders from the dormitory head, who had battled with Tête d'Or and who was drilling them at this moment, there was a whispering in the ranks. The dormitory head had just thundered an order for silence when from the main building into the yard darted an apparition.

It was small in stature, white with plaster and black with soot from the top of his smudged head of gold to the soles of his orphanage shoes. He was scudding like a rabbit across the yard toward the gate, which was at this time locked, its bars seven feet high.

The youngster's path lay where the dormitory head now stood staring at him, while the eyes of the children popped almost out of their heads. Straight at their tyrant plunged Tête d'Or, this time seeing and knowing what he was doing.

The dormitory head tried to seize him, but the youngster was too fast for him and his soiled golden head crashed into the stomach of the tyrant, knocking the wind out of him and stretching him out flat, while Tête d'Or sped on to the high and locked gate. And the hysterically cheering children saw this child of the circus climb the barred seven-foot gate like one of the monkeys that he was brought up with.

On top of the fence his love of theatrical effect made him stop, rise, blow ironical kisses to the infuriated orphanage keepers who raced toward him.

Then with a leap through the air he landed on the sidewalk outside lightly as a cat and was off toward Paris. It was Tête d'Or's first scrimmage with authority. He won it, and it gave him an appetite for more. Also it convinced him that he preferred liberty to sheltered confinement.

A fashionable carriage brought Tête d'Or to Paris without the driver's knowledge, since the youngster had somehow

tucked himself away under the carriage body and rode this way into the City of Light, where he was soon to shine in his own way.

He collected his dinner that night from different food stalls in the big markets without the formality of paying. He could not have paid in the first place, since he had not a sou in his ragged pockets, and it is doubtful if he would have paid for his meal in any event. Cheaper to take it when the owner was not looking.

But money had its use, so Tête d'Or looked around for an easy way to buy his first night's lodging if necessary. A stout market woman doing a good business in oranges drew his sharp green eyes by the frequency with which she dropped money into a wide-mouthed leather bag at her left. Tête d'Or hovered in the distance, studying the lay of the land, the short cuts to hiding places and narrow places between piles of market crates. Then he started on a run for the woman.

When he reached her he pretended to slip on a peel and knocked her off her feet. He saw to it that the mix-up of the fall was considerable. When the market woman finally disentangled herself her leather bag was torn off her and she saw her day's earnings running off across the market place on two small, but fast legs.

She raised an alarm and the market place *started* after Tête d'Or. But that was as far as they got. For the youngster seemed to vanish into a lot of crates; and two hours of search yielded the market people nothing but commotion of their own making. But the police were notified and a youngster with "a head of gold" was now for the first time on police rosters as "wanted." It was not to be the last time.

Tête d'Or worked his way through a wilderness of market crates, came out on a back street and wandered away. In the course of an hour he found himself outside the high iron fence of the Jardin des Plantes, where there is also a zoological garden. He peered through the pickets and saw familiar forms—wild animals.

The zoo was closed and the fence was high. But Tête d'Or wanted to get inside; the rest was easy. He clambered over the fence, had the zoo to himself for his visit and selected the African ibex for the honor of playing host.

His choice was due less to Tête d'Or's scientific interest than to the fact that the ibex had a warm house and plenty of

straw in it. That night the ibex was troubled by the presence of a strange lodger, and, apparently knowing that his involuntary host was a gentle creature, slept undisturbed.

With the same agility he had entered the zoo Tête d'Or left it before the attendants were up and made a gorgeous meal in a little café on the market woman's money. Then he sallied forth to conquer Paris.

The marketing crowds at the outdoor stalls in Boulevard Raspail attracted his interest because of the many housewives who carried their purses accessibly to Tête d'Or. The son of Duchesne, the pickpocket, trained to filch from a professional pickpocket, found housewives easy.

If they noticed him at all, it was to wish that such a nice boy with such pretty golden hair had a better home than one would guess from his unkempt appearance. Certainly his demure face, grimy though it was, gave them no clew that very soon they would be missing their purses. Five modest market allowances that morning combined to give Tête d'Or a good send-off on his Paris career.

He went to a bath establishment and got rid of much of the grime of his adventures. At a clothing store he outfitted himself, paying for the larger articles, filching the smaller. Then he explored Paris and decided he liked it. He next found a motherly looking janitress.

Something I have not touched upon was the youngster's literary talent. He could lie like an artist. He lied amply, colorfully, with a fine sense of realism; and with it went an actor's talent for looking whatever part he was playing. Some of it he got from his circus training; much was natural endowment.

He brought all of it to bear on the story he told that janitress. He was the son of a nobleman whose name he did not want to mention, lest he be forced to go back to his father's castle. But his father was a terrible drinker and beat the little golden-haired son of his, until life at home became unendurable. So he had run away.

But a faithful servant was sending him money secretly and would continue doing so until the terrible father died—which would happen soon, as the old man was stricken with a rapid and fatal disease. On his death Tête d'Or would inherit the big estate and would return master of it. In the meanwhile, could the kind janitress give him a corner to sleep in? He would pay for it.

The kind-hearted and at the same time shrewdly-calculat-

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ing janitress believed the story and gave him a little room off her own cubbyhole of a home. Here she made him at ease and tended him as a mother. He told her he wanted to go to school and was duly enrolled. But he spent his "school" hours exploring minutely the shopping quarter around the Samaritaine, a big department store near the Seine. This he chose as his hunting ground for some time.

Next he bought a coat of a second-hand clothing dealer, deliberately chosen because it was much too big for him. It covered him almost from head to heels and hung in wide and ample folds about his person. He then borrowed sewing material from his landlady—for another tenant, he told her. But in secret he went to work on that large overcoat converting it to his purposes.

He cut slits in the side pockets through which his hands could glide outside his garment, when he looked as though they were buried deep in his own pockets. He also made many and ample-sized inside pockets.

Then he "went to school." In and out of the shopping crowd around the Samaritaine he jostled and pushed to the indignant protests of women and men, whose pockets he explored when he seemed to be merely huddled in his great coat.

But when they saw his angelic face and apparently poverty-stricken garb, they forgave him. But later they cursed whatever thief it was that picked their pockets as they soon found them to be. Complaints began to pour into police ears. Finally a detective was assigned to look out for the pick-pocket.

He was a typical detective from the big headquarters on Quai des Orfèvres overlooking the beautiful Seine—dark, with a small mustache and black curly hair, a vivacious sparkle in his brown eyes, gestures in his talk and plenty of both.

Temperamental compared with the equable-tempered men of Scotland Yard, he worked more easily on his own hook than as part of a team. Therein he was truly Latin and different from the Scotland Yard man whose instinct and talent are for team work.

The French *flic*, as the Parisians rather disrespectfully nickname him, is more a creature of imagination than the detective of any other country. He dramatizes his problems in his mind, looks for some equally dramatic way of solving them and does everything but patiently plod, in his work.

Instead of putting in much time trying to get a description of the pickpocket he was sent out to find, M. Dubois, as we

shall call him, dressed himself up as a prosperous provincial in Paris out for a good time. Then visiting the cafés in the neighborhood of the Samaritaine, he spent a good deal of time at the little tables outside, where all the world in Paris sips its coffee and other liquid refreshment when the weather is fair.

He paid the waiters often, showing as he did so a wallet well stuffed with bills. Then he sauntered through the shopping crowds and found many an occasion to take out his wallet, as though in search of addresses written down. Carelessly he would replace the wallet in an outside pocket. But each time he did so he secretly attached the wallet to a bit of string fastened to the inside of his pocket.

Suddenly in the midst of a dense crowd he felt a tug at his pocket. He glanced down and saw a fish had bolted the bait. Swiftly he reached for the collar of an overcoat much too big for the youngster whose face he could not see because of a screen of golden hair, which completely hid the features.

But the string attached to the detective's wallet led straight into the inside of the little boy's coat. Not for long, for suddenly the link snapped, the little boy became a writhing fury and broke from the detective's grasp. In and out of the crowd the youngster burrowed like a rabbit, the detective close at his heels.

Dubois's hand was only a few inches from the youngster's loose overcoat when the latter deliberately upset an elderly woman, and the detective, to avoid stepping on her, had to stop for an instant. That was sufficient.

Down the mouth of an alley darted Tête d'Or. He knew every inch of that alley and its other exit on the next street, for he had studied it beforehand. Even as he ran into it, he stripped his large overcoat, rolled it into a ball, threw it into a cellar window he had so arranged that it would close immediately the coat was inside; and was down the other alley by the time the detective entered the first.

Without stopping, Tête d'Or took out a comb and whipped his hair back over his head. A second later he was out on the next street. When the detective came out on a breathless run a few seconds later, he saw no long-coated youngster scudding away.

He saw no one who in the least resembled him. Looking wistfully into a toy shop window was a frank-faced, nicely dressed schoolboy in black knicker suit, his blond hair de-

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morely brushed back and on his head the little cap which French students wear.

"Did you see a boy in a long overcoat run out of this alley?" the detective gasped.

"Yes, *monsieur*," the little boy replied respectfully. "He ran down to the embankment."

The detective hustled down to the Seine, while the demure little boy waited about for some time. Then he sidled back into the alley and some minutes later came out carrying a large package done up in newspaper. It was Tête d'Or's overcoat, the trick pockets inside full of the day's booty.

In the privacy of his home Tête d'Or examined interestedly the wallet which had nearly cost him his liberty. It had been fastened with a string to a stranger's pocket, apparently soon after Tête d'Or had seen it as unattached as any other wallet.

For the boy had been watching Dubois before he picked his pocket—as Dubois had hoped the unknown pickpocket would do. The string made Tête d'Or think. Either the man was very shrewd for a provincial; or he was a detective. He decided on the more cautious conclusion. It was that he did not want to run the risk of arrest.

More agreeable was it to have some one else run the risk, while Tête d'Or reaped the benefits of pocket picking. So he studied the sharp-witted little ragamuffins in a tough section of the city, made friends with five of them, led them in games and petty thieving from apple carts and proved himself a natural leader.

Then he hinted of a way he knew whereby they could get much more than by rifling apple carts, with less risk of getting a whipping. When they showed themselves interested he took them to a vacant lot and showed them what clever fingers could do in strangers' pockets.

All the boys were interested, which was a tribute to Tête d'Or's shrewdness in reading character; and all but one proved apt pupils. Tête d'Or then organized the band. He assigned districts for each boy wherein to operate; showed them how to study the lay of the land; how to make garments like his own greatcoat; how to dodge and twist; how to watch outside the police stations and detective bureaus and learn who the detectives were; and to acquire other useful knowledge.

Then he proposed a compact to them. He, as leader of the band, would plan everything and get half the takings as

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his share. The compact was sealed when each boy pricked his finger with a pin and mingling it with the blood of the others, smeared a mystic symbol on his breast.

Tête d'Or did not let his followers risk their new careers on full grown problems at first. He had them begin as he had done—with their own family. From this he had them pick the pockets of children when school was out; then servants at the street fairs. It was only when his lieutenants showed themselves better than their victims, that he let them go on to bigger game.

Meanwhile Detective Dubois, who for understandable reasons did not report to his superiors the loss of his wallet, combed the city in vain for the youngster in the long overcoat. He hunted alone, which is characteristic of the Paris detective. He devised many another clever bait for the pickpocket he was hunting; shot at him, so to say, without seeing him. Nine times his shot went wide; and the tenth had not yet found its mark.

Then a perfect epidemic of juvenile pickpockets broke out. Reports from all over the city came of boys who snatched purses, dodged down alleys and were never seen again. Dubois compared it with his own experience.

"Ha, either the same boy or confederates of his! A band, perhaps!" he said to himself. "That would make it easier to handle!"

He still had faith in his device of a string attached to a wallet, wherewith to catch his fish. But this time he added a fishhook; or rather several of them. Also he had reason to suspect that his identity was known to the gang he was fishing for. So he engaged the coöperation of a friend of his, a pretty actress who wore a striking looking coat of mannish pattern with pockets on the outside. The coat was specially made for the purpose.

Mlle. Suzanne mingled with shoppers in every part of the city where the pickpockets were reported and dropped her purse into one of the outside pockets every time she used it, which was often and conspicuously.

Finally one morning in the thick of a crowd on the avenue de l'Opéra she felt a tug at her coat and a sharp outcry. She looked down and saw a boy's hand in her outside pocket. He was a dark-faced little ragamuffin, his eyes blazing with pain and fright, his hand still in her pocket.

"Please, *mademoiselle*, my hand—got caught—" he stammered.

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"In my pocket? How strange! Come and we'll see about it."

The youngster moved off with her, wincing with each step that they took. His hand, still in her pocket, seemed the cause of his pain.

In a drug store stood Dubois waiting for his fish. When the woman entered with the youngster a doctor had to extricate the boy's hand from the nest of fishhooks which had been so fastened inside the pocket that a hand could easily get into it, but had five steel barbs to contend with in getting out—unless one knew the fishhooks were there.

"Well, little devilfish, shall we go to the chief of police?" asked Dubois. "Or shall we go to where you meet your fellow pickpockets?"

The youngster's loyalty was not equal to the test and he consented to betray Tête d'Or. That night when the golden-headed leader of the band got home he saw nothing wrong in his room—until from behind the curtain issued Dubois and grabbed him by the golden hair which he knew could not come off.

Dubois was not taking chances by now. So he handcuffed Tête d'Or and tied his feet with some rope he found in the room. Tête d'Or threw himself to the floor apparently in a hysterical rage. But he fell with his feet near a jog in the wall, which presented an edge of rough cement.

Dubois meanwhile examined the boy's room. Here he found evidence of a well-defined taste in reading. For he had quite a library in his room. He had collected it from the little bookstalls that line the left bank of the Seine; and undoubtedly had done his shopping in the same way he got his money. The books all dealt with the exploits of Cartouche, Mandrin and other famous French criminals.

Dubois looked down on his prisoner as he examined his library.

"There's no use of your wriggling so hard, little worm!" he said. "You're caught!"

Then he went to the door to open it and carry Tête d'Or out. But at that moment Tête d'Or went out of the window. For his "wriggling," which Dubois said would do him no good, consisted of chafing his rope-tied feet against the rough cement jog in the wall until the rope was worn through.

So astounded was Dubois to see the youngster dive head first through the window without bothering to open it, that for some moments he remained gaping. When he finally dashed

to the broken window he saw little but night. The window was on the ground floor. Tête d'Or knew every inch of his courtyard and was even then scuttling down dark streets, his handcuffed hands exposing him to capture every moment.

But he managed to reach a "fence" he knew, a receiver of stolen goods, who sawed off the steel links. For a week Tête d'Or remained at liberty. But the same youngster who preferred his own liberty to Tête d'Or's again betrayed him. This time Dubois landed him in a cell.

He was tried in court and found guilty. The judge, knowing how a year seems an interminable period to youth, tried to impress the gravity of the sentence he was passing.

"I shall have you confined for a year—" he began.

The green-eyed little prisoner spoke up with a sneer.

"Huh, a year is only twelve months—!" Then his little ratlike eyes darted about the room. He had been using them to some purpose for the past half hour. "But," he added, "even twelve months is too long!"

The prisoner's dock had a little balustrade about it. Springing to it before the attendant could seize him Tête d'Or launched off from it as a trapeze performer from a spring-board and leaped to the judge's desk; from there to the floor; tore open the door and was out of it three inches in front of the attendants. The door slammed in their faces. The court was in a wild uproar. The little rascal was fleeing down the corridors and steps, dodging dizzily in and out of rooms.

One of them was full of papers and documents piled everywhere. On a desk stood a kerosene reading lamp. Snatching this up Tête d'Or shrieked

"Stand out of the way or I'll throw it!"

The captors made a dash at him, the lamp crashed to a pile of papers, the kerosene spilled, the flames caught. It was amid this scene of men trying to stamp out fire and at the same time capture him, that Tête d'Or made his involuntary bow from the hitherto ample stage he had held.

The year of confinement was also a year of instruction to Tête d'Or. He picked up knowledge of crime as fast as he had learned circus tricks. He became a promising disciple of the heroes he loved to read, the Cartouches of to-day. At the end of his year of confinement he was sent to a reformatory.

It did not take him one week before he made his first leap for freedom. It was his last. He had measured his chances of landing on a narrow ledge one story below the window from which he leaped. But he was out of practice

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and his foot missed its mark by a quarter inch—enough to break his neck. Which was probably what the government would have done for him eventually with its specially constructed machine used for capital punishment in France.

Tête d'Or was only twelve years old. In his precocity he was, of course, Tête d'Or. But in his daring, dash and imagination he was a true Frenchman of the criminal classes. That is why in any account of the French police, the story is usually one principally concerning the exploits of the criminal, who sets the pace, plays the tune and leads the dance for the police to follow.

But in the Paris police they have to deal with fellow countrymen of kindred endowments. So that if the French criminal sets the tune, sooner or later he has to pay the fiddler. And the whole makes French police records a rich and fascinating library.

CHAPTER VIII

THE WOUNDED PIGEON

JEANNE DE LA COUR once tried her hand at writing fiction. She failed at it. Which shows how vastly different life is from fiction; and also how amazingly like good fiction life can sometimes be, especially if it is among French criminals. For after making a failure at writing plots, she concocted a plot such as would make most writers of fiction green with envy. Then she proceeded to *live* it.

She used as elements in the plot two infatuated victims of her charms, a wounded pigeon, a bottle of vitriol, a bundle of incriminating love letters, and a mask ball at the Opera in Paris. And were it not for the cleverness of the Paris police, she—the brilliant villainess of the plot—would have continued to be accepted by the public as the tender-hearted heroine of the fascinating story the chief of police of Paris told me.

In the brilliance, daring, cruelty, and imagination which Jeanne de la Cour showed in her plot we get an inkling of the problem which confronts the police of Paris—to outguess, outdo, and outwit the most dashing criminal class in the world.

To appreciate fully Jeanne's picturesque character it is worth while going back to her childhood in Paris, where she was born of a wandering printer and a flower girl. Even as a child Jeanne was a slender little beauty with an aristocratic air and a haughty, imperious temper.

One day she was standing in the street of a poor quarter of Paris where her parents lived, watching the other children at play. Jeanne's clothes were as poor as the neighborhood. But she kept them immaculate and wore them with an air of distinction. She did not play with the noisy, somewhat grimy children, but stayed aloof, looking on with a supercilious tilt to her pretty nose.

Through the street came a carriage from the "high world," a baroness who wanted a short cut to her home and did not mind if it took her through the slums. She was like that in everything she wanted—took short cuts to it.

Looking out of her carriage window, she saw a poorly dressed little girl looking as though she were used to ermine. The baroness stopped the carriage and called the child to her.

Jeanne, snob that she was always, gladly came.

"Your parents are poor, my child; I am rich. I shall bring you up."

She took a short cut to Jeanne, and when she got home that day the baroness had an adopted child with her. In the atmosphere of the new home Jeanne's snobbishness flowered like an orchid in a hothouse. Some newly rich came to visit the baroness, and their daughter, a little girl of Jeanne's age, wanted to become friendly. Jeanne's aristocratic nose and chin lifted disdainfully.

"The daughter of a baroness doesn't play with the daughter of a wine merchant."

But poetic justice overtook the little snob. When she had just turned eleven her parents decided that there was money to be made by her. So they called on the baroness, and, to the child's disgust, took her away to their grubby home. To complete her fury she was given bunches of violets by her parents and sent out on the big boulevards of Paris to sell them.

Now, the boulevards of Paris do not make the most select school for an attractive girl such as Jeanne was developing to be. The result was that by the time she was eighteen she was keen as steel, just about as warm as that at heart, and quite indifferent as to the means she used in getting whatever she wanted.

She decided to try marriage, and had no difficulty in landing her fish—a well-to-do provision man. M. Gras had a square jaw, and in his case it really denoted will power. In addition to that he had a splendid physique. When Jeanne first unleashed her temper the storm struck a mountain. There were thunder, lightning, cloudbursts. This kept up for two years. It tells something about Jeanne, the fact that the mountain was worn out in the contest; for M. Gras died in the third year of their marriage. But he saw to it that his wife got not a franc of his money.

Faced again with the problem of self-support, Jeanne, white-hot in her heart at the man who cut her off without a cent, turned to business with the little money she had filched from her husband when he was alive. But her competitors, men, drove her into bankruptcy.

She tried acting. But the critics, men, and her audience, mostly men, laughed her off the stage.

She speculated on the stock market with some money she got out of an adventure. Men she never laid eyes on manipulated her stock and took away her last cent. Then she tried her hand at writing fiction; but the editors—once more men—threw her stories into the waste basket.

"Your plots are too improbable," they told her.

Then Jeanne Amenaide Brécourt—that was her name at the time—stepped back to take a good look at this world of men who were frustrating her at every effort. There was a wicked light in her half closed black eyes. Her pale oval face was a study in hatred. Her lips, beautiful, vivid, sensuous, took on a slow, hard smile that promised ill for any one who crossed her path thereafter. Then she sat down and wrote to her sister, the only confidante she had:

"I am going to make men love me hereafter. In return I shall make them suffer. They have made me see life as only dust and lies and failure, if one tries to live honestly. All right. So much the worse for men who get in my way. They barred my way, have they? Very well, I shall use them as stepping-stones.

"As soon as they begin to fail me or are played out I shall put them scornfully aside. Society is a vast chessboard, men shall be my pawns, some white, some black. I shall move them as I please and break them when they bore me."

She took the name of Jeanne de la Cour, posed successfully as a baroness, and began her new career. She seems to have kept to her program. One young man, a German, she drove to suicide. Another, whom she tired of, she induced to take drugs until he, too, died. A third she drove insane, and later, mercifully, he died, too.

Of the first she wrote: "One less German in Paris!" Of the second: "It was bound to happen; he bored me." Of the third: "He was a fool who, in spite of all I did to him, died believing in women!"

But life was taking toll of Jeanne also. In order to lead men, many men, on the road to destruction, she had to travel the same dangerous road herself. The result was that the fascinating beauty of the woman soon began to show the ravages of hard living, and her health broke down. Her doctors ordered her to a cure resort, Vittel, where fashionable French idlers go to idle and to be restored to the freshness they spend in dissipation.

Here the wounded pigeon entered Jeanne's plot. There is a gentle sport much in vogue at these resorts which is played like this:

You dress in the smartest shooting garb of the current fashion and go to the exclusive club where this sport is the social event of the season. There a perfect grass semicircle has been cultivated for the sport.

Like the sticks of a fan, there radiate from where you stand half a dozen lines of cement, each terminating at a box no more than thirty feet from you. You bring to your shoulder the butt of a costly shining fowling piece with both barrels loaded with birdshot.

At the proper moment an attendant in livery pulls a string which opens a trapdoor in the box at which your gun points. The glimpse of sky and sun thus revealed tempts a pigeon, which has been imprisoned there, to fly up. To make sure that the pigeon should not fly too successfully, its tail feathers have been clipped. At the moment the pigeon leaves the box you, standing only thirty feet away, let go with both barrels.

The birdshot spreads over an area about four times that which the pigeon can cover in flight at the moment you shoot. To the polite patter of fashionably gloved hands in the gallery the pigeon drops to the ground sometimes blown to pieces; more rarely only wounded.

A hunting dog of pure breed trots out to the pigeon and, doing only what he was trained to do, takes it gently in its mouth and brings that pigeon to you. The bird is then thrown away. This completes the charming incident.

Occasionally, as I said, a "sportsman" fails to kill his pigeon. This happened while Jeanne de la Cour was at Vittel, and one such shot permitted a pigeon to fly on and escape with only a smashed beak, a broken wing, and bits of lead in its otherwise unhurt body.

By a freak of fortune it flew to the fashionable hotel where Jeanne de la Cour was staying. The bird, exhausted and bleeding, rested on Jeanne's window sill. Something strange stirred in the heart of the woman at the sight—an unaccustomed feeling of pity. Softly murmuring, she opened the window and the pigeon flew in. Jeanne then closed the window.

But try as she would, Jeanne could not catch the frightened bird. It evaded her, fluttering desperately against the ceiling. Finally the look that was more natural to Jeanne came into her eyes.

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"All right, my little lad, you will come to me!"

Then she let the little bird nearly starve to death. Driven by the greatest urge in nature, the bird descended and pecked at the food Jeanne held out. Having won, Jeanne forgave it, bound up its wounds, and treated it kindly. The bird soon lost its fear and began to mend. Jeanne wrote to her sister:

For the moment his little heart is full of gratitude. Every time I enter the room his wings flutter with joy. But it is still only gratitude—not love. When he needs me no longer I am sure he will take his leave. For he is male, and in his heart of hearts lives the ingratitude of males.

The idle world at Jeanne's hotel and elsewhere at Vittel was thrown into agitation by Jeanne and her pigeon. Some, touched by the story, became furious at pigeon shooting and sought to have the sport abolished by the local authorities. Others fought against this proposal. But all called Jeanne "the charmer."

This compliment, Jeanne bitterly reflected, was due to her kindness to the pigeon, and not to her physical charms. For she was now forty years old. Her gifts of beauty were fading under the life she had been leading. Her hair showed touches of gray in her mirror; and although they soon turned again apparently to the gold of youth, she could not hide the fading light in her eyes, nor could corsets give her once more the elastic carriage of youth.

Men would soon begin to notice these things and even the indiscriminating would cease to be attracted by her. Then would come shabbiness, poverty, and a return to the wretched surroundings of her childhood—but with what a difference! Not the uncharted romantic vista of youth, but a clearly visualized old age in degradation. Jeanne de la Cour told herself that if she wanted to escape that fate she would have to act quickly and firmly.

At this juncture came on the scene George de la Pierre. He was a youth of twenty, rich, idle, sentimental, and not in the least versed in character or life. He was ideal prey for Jeanne. She brought to bear on the callow youth all the skill of a mistress of her art. She was thoughtful and tender; she was playmate and counsellor; she inspired him with ambition, but saw to it that this ambition did not exclude her from playing the most important rôle in his life.

George began to feel that not only his future but his life's happiness depended on Jeanne de la Cour. He fell in love

with her with the abandon of early youth and with a tenacity of which he was peculiarly capable.

He lived with his parents in the country. Jeanne returned to Paris. He wrote her at this time: "I don't know what would become of me if I didn't feel your love watch over me."

But Jeanne was no fool, and she knew that in time George's parents, who were learning of his love affair with Jeanne, would take him away from her and marry him to some worthy young woman of means and respectable family. If Jeanne meant to cling to her spar she would have to secure him to her with some bond more permanent than the first love of a youth for a woman not in his social class. Even if his love remained, his money—which was the most important thing to Jeanne—was in the hands of his parents. They would cut him off instantly if he married her or refused to marry any one they picked for him.

But how was she to keep him hers?

She was spending sleepless nights over this problem when a visit to a friend of hers gave Jeanne her inspiration. This friend was a former ballet dancer, but, being of Jeanne's age, was also faced with the problem of the woman whose livelihood depends on her youth but who is no longer young.

Jeanne had not visited her for some time, and was therefore unprepared to see her friend lead a young man into the room by the hand. He was blind. With touching tenderness the woman guided him to a sofa, acted as eyes and hands to him, and in every way sought to make up to him for the cruelty fate had inflicted on him.

"Her wounded pigeon!" Jeanne said to herself.

When the two women were alone the former dancer explained her situation.

"Like you, I am past forty. My youth has gone. My hair is turning gray. My figure is going. I shall soon be cast adrift and alone must come to wreck. This boy is a spar. I need him. He needs me. For, poor fellow, no young girl of his class would marry a blind man. And I shall thus be out of reach of want so long as he needs me."

"Yes, and your lover will never see you grow old and fade!" Jeanne added bitterly.

She went home that day, her mind seething. If she could only secure George de la Pierre to herself as the former ballet dancer had secured her young man! How to make George her wounded pigeon? How?

But the terrible answer was already in her mind. At first she turned from it in fright. But little by little she became accustomed to the idea. Her old bitterness against men came back to help her steel herself to the plan. And her new terror of old age and poverty finally capped her resolution.

At this time, too, there reëntered into her life a man, Maurice Natali. It was an echo of young days. As a poor boy he had fallen violently in love with Jeanne when she was as poor as he. But she had spurned him as she had spurned the wine merchant's daughter to play with.

Maurice had never outgrown his love for the girl of his childhood days, the more so as she developed into a beauty and lived in an atmosphere of luxury that dazzled the humble workman in an oil refinery, which he was. He married, had two children, became a widower. Then chance came, and his enraptured gaze fell once more on Jeanne de la Cour.

Now that life was fading for her, Jeanne was touched by his fidelity; but it was far from being love that she felt for Maurice. However, she let him dance attendance on her, spend Sundays tending her fire, fetching and carrying for her, acting as servant. Maurice willingly became her slave in the passionate hope that some day he would become her beloved. But she saw to it that George de la Pierre knew nothing of Maurice.

One day as Maurice was kneeling at her fire sweeping its ashes she leaned forward and touched his hair with a caress.

"Do you love me, Maurice?" she asked softly.

He caught her hand and pressed it to his cheek. Words failed him.

Jeanne's eyes were scanning the future. Only an hour earlier she had received a letter from George, part of which read:

I cannot bear the thought of leaving you, and I don't mean to do it. But I am depressed at difficulties with my family. It is not about money or business that they so trouble me, but about something that concerns you, and which I can speak of only when I see you next. And much as I yearn to see you, I dread it this time, seeing that I have to broach this subject to you.

With these words in her thoughts she looked down on the kneeling devoted slave at her feet.

"Will you do something for me?" she asked.

"Anything."

She paused. "I want to clean some copper. Will you get me a little vial of vitriol?"

He looked up in surprise. "Is that all you want of me?" "For the present."

Maurice had a harder time getting vitriol than he expected. But he got it and brought it to her. Meanwhile she wrote George, who was staying with his parents in the country at this time.

You must come to Paris next Friday. Whatever it is you have to tell me you can tell me at the mask ball at the Opera, which takes place that night. It will make it easier for me to hear it in such a setting. Indeed, I have set my heart on it and you must bear me out in my plan to go there.

He wrote back:

I wonder why you want to go to such an affair. However, if you have set your heart on it I will take you there.

For some reason he felt an unaccountable oppression he could not define. His family remarked it. He wrote Jeanne again:

I am oppressed by some presentiment of evil I cannot dispel or explain. You can't imagine what horrid thoughts possess me. I think, however, I shall be less sad when I meet you.

On the morning of the dance she sent a message to Maurice, her slave, asking him not to go to work that day but come to her. When he came he found her apparently in the depths of despair. "What is it, Jeanne?" he cried.

Jeanne wept with more art than she had ever used in her brief venture as an actress in the theater. Finally she told him a story. She had for years been saving a little sum of money, which was to be her slight protection against old age, her shelter when she would be helpless.

But a young scoundrel had come across her path, a youth with a glib tongue and good looks. He had won her affection and her confidence. He induced her to give him her money to invest. Now it seemed that the man was a swindler, for he told her the money was in danger. She knew now it was lost to her. He still pretended that there was hope for the investment yet.

But from a letter she had received from him that afternoon it was clear to her what was going to happen. He had asked her to go to the mask ball at the Opera that night, to get her in as good humor as he could. Then when he brought her to her door again he would undoubtedly tell her the money was gone forever and he would bid her good-by, too.

"The unspeakable scoundrel!" Maurice cried.

Jeanne wept. "It was he who has kept me from marrying you!"

Maurice was beside himself. She watched him stride up and down the room like a caged beast.

"Maurice," she whispered. "I want revenge! I am weak. He is young and strong. What can I do to revenge the loss of my money, the shelter of which he has robbed me, the wound to my self-esteem he has dealt?"

"I'll beat him up!" Maurice cried, clenching his fists.

She laughed bitterly. "Pshaw! A fist fight! And you will not beat him up. For young as he is he is stronger than you. He will beat you up instead. And will that give me back my money? Will that make me forget my shelterless old age?"

"Jeanne, marry me, my dear—" he pleaded.

She turned furiously on him. "Until I am revenged on this man don't show your face to me. For I have no thought of anything while he goes unscathed. I shall think neither of you nor of marriage so long as I go unrevenged. But help me revenge myself and I marry you the very next day!"

"What do you want me to do?" he demanded.

Her eyes burned on his. From her bosom she took out the little vial of vitriol and without taking her look off him she extended it and put it into his hand. He drew back appalled.

"No, Jeanne, no! For God's sake, no!"

"Yes, Maurice!" Again she was a better actress than ever she had been on the stage. "For if you don't do it I shall do it myself. They will throw me into prison for it, of course. But I shall not stay there long. There is always a way to leave this life that has become so empty for me. If I cannot have my revenge I want nothing more of you or of life."

The poor workman suffered the tortures of the damned. To be so near the paradise he had dreamed of most of his life, marriage to this woman, and yet have so terrible a thing bar his way to it! He struggled as well as he could. Finally exhausted with the ordeal he whispered:

"I'll do it!"

She bent down and for the first time in his life he felt her lips on his.

"You had better hide in the inner room," she whispered. "He will be here any time now and I want you to look at him through the keyhole so that you will recognize him

when we come back from the ball to-night. Then hide in the courtyard. He and I will pass the dark corner near the pavilion.

"I will stay behind a little to hold the gate open for you to escape by. Nobody will see you, of course. I shall scream and tell of a robber who had snatched George's purse and mine. No one will suspect you. You will come to-morrow. And I will marry you."

An hour later George de la Pierre arrived at Jeanne's rooms, dressed in fancy costume. He had recovered his spirits and at the sight of Jeanne in the costume of Columbine, with a golden wig, her fading face bright with cosmetics, her eyes shining with excitement he exclaimed with delight. Maurice on his knees in the next room spying through the keyhole saw him kiss Jeanne.

George and Jeanne in their gay costumes soon left and Maurice took up his vigil. The hours passed in torment for him. Terror at what he was about to do; jealousy drowning terror; longing reëncoring jealousy; terror again. Finally toward two in the morning he heard wheels. The lovers were back from the ball.

There was no moon in the sky. George de la Pierre helped Jeanne out of the carriage and wanted to hold the gate open for her. But she whispered.

"No, you hurry ahead. I don't want the neighbors to see you!"

George did so, and as he passed a dark corner near the pavilion he wondered if it was a man he saw in its deepest shadow. The next instant liquid fire was consuming his face. His screams awoke the neighborhood. Jeanne, too, screamed and ran to him.

"Oh, what is it, my beloved?" she cried. "What has happened— Help! Thieves! Murder!"

She took George de la Pierre to her room and sent for the doctors, who arrived with the police. To the police she told a story of a robber who had thrown vitriol over her escort, then snatched his purse and hers.

The doctors examined George, did what they could for him, and declared that he would be blind and disfigured for life.

"Oh, my poor wounded pigeon!" she cried with deep emotion. "I will be his eyes for him and take care of him as long as he needs me!"

George's family were notified by the police and they came

to take him away. She would not let any of them even approach him.

"The doctors say that the least emotion is dangerous for him," she told them. "He wants to see no one but me."

She stayed up thirty nights nursing him, at the same time fighting off his family. As for George, he clung to her devotion as she clung to him.

Then one day there came into the room where she and George were living, M. Macé, at that time chief of the detective service of the Paris police. Courteous, sympathetic, exceedingly tactful, he questioned the young man. What enemies had he? M. Macé asked.

"None," said George de la Pierre confidently. "It was a robber. But I want no prosecution, no publicity. All I want is to be left alone with my brave and devoted nurse and comrade. I want to be spared the excitement of a contest between her and my family. They want to take me away from this woman, whom I love dearly, who loves me dearly, who is devoting her life to me and who has proved to be the one human being in the world for me!"

M. Macé looked at Jeanne thoughtfully.

"*Madame*, may I speak to you in the next room for a few moments?" he asked politely. "This matter of the family ought to be discussed really—"

"You can speak to me before George," she said sharply. "We have no secrets from each other."

"I won't detain you more than a few minutes—if I can speak to you in private," M. Macé persisted.

"He can't spare me even for half a minute."

Into M. Macé's eyes came an unmistakable look. It was no longer a matter of courtesy but of command. Jeanne smiled coldly but did not budge. M. Macé went on to plead with her apparently. But actually he took out of his pocket a package of letters. He showed them to her one by one as he talked.

"Really you should grant me the interview," was what George heard. But what spoke to Jeanne was a card written to her from a lover who had killed himself. It read: "Jeanne, in the flush of my youth I die because you are cruel. S."

Then he held up to Jeanne's keen gaze one of a series of blackmailing letters she had used at one time. Then followed a bill for the purchase of the drug hasheesh, to which she was addicted. These and other evidences of a spotted past were

M. Macé's actual if silent arguments while he pleaded aloud apparently in vain.

Jeanne looked at the sightless young man in silence; focused on him all she knew of life and character; decided; then said carelessly:

"I should think a busy man like you would know better than to waste time threatening me. Good afternoon, M. Macé, since you have to go."

The chief of the detective service turned to George.

"I am under the painful necessity, M. de la Pierre, of letting you know the true character of this woman, whom you seem to prefer to your family. We have had her past under observation for some time. Here are a few papers one of our men found in a praying stool of hers," he said.

And he proceeded to read the papers he had hoped would intimidate Jeanne. As he read them aloud to the sightless young man, George grew in agitation. But when M. Macé had finished George cried:

"It makes no difference to me what Jeanne was to other men! It is what she *is* and not what she *was* that matters. And to me she is the most loyal woman in the world!"

M. Macé put away his now no longer silent, but still ineffectual arguments.

"Nevertheless *madame* will talk to me in private," he insisted. "I don't want to distress you any further, M. de la Pierre. But if she does not do as I ask the blame for any further distress I have to inflict on you will be hers. *Madame!*"

She laughed at him.

Whereupon M. Macé turned again to George. "*Monsieur*, you must prepare yourself for a painful surprise," he said gravely. "We, the police, in our hunt for the man who threw vitriol over you, have had a man concealed in this house since the beginning of the case."

M. Macé saw Jeanne and George start. "Our man," went on M. Macé, "found the clues to her past in the praying stool. But as they have made no impression on you, M. de la Pierre, I am compelled to tell you what else he found out. Four days ago you, *monsieur*, asked Jeanne to go to the safety vaults where you keep your important papers, and bring back a certain packet of letters, which you asked her under no circumstances to open. You gave her the authorization and the key to the box at the safety vaults. She returned with the packet of letters. You then asked her to throw the

packet into the fire. You heard what you thought were the letters falling into the fire.

"What you did—or thought you did—does you great credit. The letters would have implicated the honor of a woman high in society. It would have brought unhappiness, tragedy into her domestic life. You wanted that danger removed, so you ordered Jeanne to burn that packet.

"But what she threw into the fire really was a bundle of waste paper tied together like your letters. Jeanne de la Cour, whose character you cling to so, has kept the letters—or thought she did. She wanted these letters to use as a club if ever any one took you away from her. Or if you grew tired of her. I hold these letters in my hand. Shall I read them aloud to you?"

The young man sprang to his feet with a choking cry.

"Good God, no! Jeanne, Jeanne, is this true?"

"No need to ask her, *monsieur!*" M. Macé said sternly. "The answer can be read in every one of these letters!"

The young man sank to his chair, the heart fallen out of his faith in humanity. Now there was no longer any doubting the testimony of the famous chief of Paris detectives. Then the bitterness of his experience roused him again and he took the arm one of M. Macé's aides extended. Without a word to Jeanne he staggered out of the room.

Jeanne was about to follow with a last effort to recover him, when the young man's cry came up the stairway.

"M. Macé, those letters, for God's sake!"

"I am burning them!" M. Macé called from the fireplace where he was feeding them to the flames. Then to Jeanne he said:

"You are coming with me to the prefecture of police. You were seen in the Père Lachaise Cemetery last night quarreling with a woman. We arrested that 'woman.' It is Maurice Natali. He has confessed to throwing the vitriol. But he incriminates you. Come—"

His hand shot out and caught hers just as she had snatched a revolver out of a bureau drawer and turned the muzzle on herself. Even in that the police of Paris foiled that brilliant criminal. Maurice Natali received five years in prison.

Jeanne de la Cour spent her declining years also in prison. But had it not been for the imagination and daring of the Paris police, however, George and his family would have been no match for her in the working out of her "wounded pigeon" plot. But the police of Paris need daring and imagination to cope with the French criminal class.

CHAPTER IX

THE ART BURGLAR

FIRST a duel of wits, brilliant, fitful, temperamental; then the flash of revolver fire—this seems to be the typical story when the Paris police hunt the French criminal. Let us consider, for example, a case that agitated Paris several years ago.

In the fashionable district around the Arc de Triomphe, in what is known as the Etoile section of the city, a series of robberies attracted attention at that time because of the exquisite taste of the burglars. In each case the home robbed was that of some rich *connoisseur*, and the objects taken were always works of art.

At first the burglaries were considered separate, as the work of different men. Then were discovered several factors in common in all these thefts. First was the fact that the burglars in each case were themselves artists in their line. Not a finger-print, not a careless slip, not the slightest clew did they leave behind for the police to work on.

Then the peculiar fact became clear that in every case only one or at most two objects of art were stolen, when it would have been comparatively easy to increase the haul with little increase in the danger of getting it away. Minor, but nevertheless profitable, loot like silver and even gold objects were clearly disregarded, not merely overlooked.

There was but one serious argument against the theory of a single hand operating on all these jobs. Police know that criminals specialize in their work as well as the rest of humanity. A second story burglar will not go in for safe cracking; a safe cracker will rarely bother with pictures; and a midnight worker will almost never venture on a daylight robbery. But in this series almost every kind of burglary had been carried off with artistic finish.

Let us call the detective who was given the case to run down, Dornay. He is still in the service, and M. Faralique, chief of the detective bureau of the Paris police, who analyzed this case for me, does not want his detectives advertised; for

the better known one of his men becomes the less value he is to the detective force. Dornay embodied all the gifts and all the limitations of the Paris detective.

Highly imaginative, he had little patience for the patient, plodding, drudging thoroughness with which Scotland Yard works on a clew. So that he considered instinctively only those methods which would win in a brilliant gamble. Temperamental as an artist, he worked best alone. A Paris criminal hunt is more likely to be a solo performance than with almost any other police.

Dornay sat down to study his case almost as a fiction writer sits down to weave his story when the first chapters are already written, but the ending is still a blank. "Suppose I have my villain do this or that," muses the writer. "Suppose my burglar—or is it a band?—is after loot as loot," mused Dornay. "Then I must look mainly to the receivers of stolen goods for my results. But not a single article has been traced in all Europe. So away with that theory!

"Of course they may be biding their time, and may sell only after they think the affair has quieted down. But if I know thieves at all, I know they aren't patient about waiting to cash in their takings. Now suppose my villain—or villains—are stealing for themselves, for their own homes.

"Preposterous? Preposterous to imagine in real life what the English author imagined for his own burglar hero, Raffles? Of course not. Nothing is preposterous for the imagination. At any rate it costs little to let the imagination play. So let us play with the idea that the burglar—or burglars?—is stealing for themselves. Let us consider then what sort of things he steals."

He made a minutely descriptive list of the objects stolen in the whole series of burglaries. Then he called in a famous art dealer and said:

"Look this list over and tell me—do you see anything in common to all these objects, any taste that would include them all, any interest in a given period of art, or in any particular school or style?"

The art dealer studied the list long. Suddenly his hands went out in an expressive French gesture. "But this man is a master of the art of arts—the blending of many works of art into the perfect ensemble of a palace such as only an artist would combine! For, see! I am imagining a room in which are placed all these objects he has stolen. It would be of a harmony and beauty unsurpassed.

"Every object stolen belongs with every other, although they have been taken from different homes. I see the room! I see the style of the man—eclectic, widely cultured, rich in appetite for color, yet sensitive to the slightest discord!"

"Then it is some *one* and not a band that does the choosing!" Dornay exclaimed. "But how does he come to possess so many different kinds of skill in burglary?"

"As to that I cannot help you," the art dealer said. "I only know art objects."

"I was only musing aloud," Dornay replied. "But you *can* help me—even more than you have already done. Cast about, search, find me some object of art that would fit into that beautiful room, that would strike the fancy of that artistic taste you seem to see so clearly."

The art dealer looked his bewilderment. "In order that it may be stolen by him?" he demanded.

"Exactly!" Dornay exclaimed.

In a week the art dealer brought Dornay a golden chalice of iridescent glass of exquisite workmanship and considerable value. "The man would give his soul to have this in that room of his!" he said. "But if he lays his clutches on it you, or whoever stands responsible for it, will have a pretty penny to pay."

"That has already been arranged for," Dornay assured him.

"And how are you going about it," the art dealer asked curiously. "Advertise that it is ready for him to come and steal it?"

"Something very much like that," smiled Dornay. "And you're going to help me. The victims of these burglaries have formed—at my suggestion—a fund wherewith to get up this advertisement."

Two weeks later the Paris newspapers carried accounts of lavish entertainment at the home of a newly arrived, newly rich Brazilian millionaire, who had come to Paris for his honeymoon, and had set up a small but extremely elegant establishment in the Etoile section, where he was giving a series of brilliant soirées. The couple, Aragio by name, was described as being different from the usual *nouveau riche* in that he and his beautiful young wife both had exquisite taste in matters artistic, and showed it in the many beauties of their collection of art objects.

Some of these were photographed and reproduced in the newspapers. Among these was a chalice of iridescent glass

rimmed and worked with gold on which a beautiful design of Arabesque character was carved.

True to the artistic temperament, the papers went on to say, Senhor Aragio was somewhat bohemian in his social tastes and so far from being socially exclusive he kept practically open house to all who had the sensibilities to appreciate his art collection. The Latin Quarter flocked to his parties; literary Paris was to be found there; several noted eccentrics in the social life of Paris appeared at the soirées and perpetrated their amusing antics there. Altogether the Aragio *salon* became good for a series of sparkling minor stories of the social and art worlds.

Then one morning it became a front page sensation. It had been robbed, undoubtedly by the same gang that had been looting the Etoile section. But with what a difference of technique this time! It seems that about two in the morning the Aragio butler, a Frenchman who had come with the Aragios to Paris, so it was said, heard a slight noise in the rear of the Aragio apartment. How the butler came to hear from his room on the floor below such a slight noise as he described, no one thought to ask.

But he lay hidden in an Italian Renaissance chest until the person who was working at the latch of the window to the room entered. Suddenly the electric lights in the room flashed on; from the chest rose the butler—our friend Dornay. A revolver pointing straight at the head of a young burglar who stood near the mantel, his hand stretched to take the golden chalice that had been so much featured in the papers.

As in the doors and windows of the room appeared other men with revolvers, the burglar, who did not seem possessed with great intelligence, and was a deaf mute in the bargain, threw up his hands and surrendered. He was taken to police headquarters, the police certain that they had captured the long-sought-for Etoile burglar.

At the police headquarters the man, who gave his name as Touchon, was questioned by detectives versed in the deaf and dumb alphabet. He told a story to which he clung tenaciously. He admitted an attempt at burglary. But he did this particular job, he said, because a stranger he had met told him he had set his heart on the golden chalice of which he had read, and would pay him well for it. He had met the stranger in a café, Touchon insisted, but the man seemed to know a great deal about Touchon. How, Touchon could not guess.

The stranger convinced Touchon, however, that he was no

agent of the police, and even gave the young burglar plans of how to enter the Aragio home. The agreement was that the stranger would call after the burglary at Touchon's home, and buy the chalice for ten thousand francs.

The police would have kept the robbery secret. But something which occurred told them plainly that the stranger would never walk into the trap. For while the police were interrogating Touchon at the police headquarters in the early hours of dawn, the lone watchman who had been left at the Aragio home was knocked on the head by some one who must have stolen in through the very window forced by Touchon, and the *gold chalice was stolen*.

What added to the sensation was that the Aragio home soon after dissolved into thin air, and the Aragios disappeared. It was months later that the real story came out. The Aragios were agents of Dornay's. Their lavish home had been a stage set gotten together at the expense of the victims of the Etoile robberies in the hope of trapping the perpetrators.

The whole was a brilliant scheme by Dornay—and a brilliant failure. Now that the bird for whom the net had been spread had actually flown off with the bait, the Aragio furnishings were scattered to the places whence they had been borrowed; and the backers of Dornay's imagination had the cost of the golden chalice to bear.

But Dornay did not lose heart altogether. There had been a side line to his experiment which up to then he had not followed up, for a reason that is characteristic of the difference between the Scotland Yard man and the Paris detective. Dornay had prepared the other plan to be used only if his main and gambling chance did not work out. The other scheme required much laborious and coöperative working up, and Dornay did not want to have to resort to it unless his gamble failed. Now, however, he was forced to use it if he wanted to save anything from the wreck.

The guests at the Aragio soirées had been lavishly treated to refreshment. The two flunkeys who served delectable wines and tidbits always wore gloves when handling the bottles and wine glasses the guests had used. Those who gave the matter a thought took this bit of elegance as an exotic novelty. None of them understood the real purpose of this innovation.

The dishes and glasses handed the guests were first polished perfectly clean. When the guests received them from the gloved hands of the flunkeys there was no trace of human touch upon them. But when the flunkeys took the same

dishes and glasses back, there were on each glass and plate the finger-prints of the guest who had handled them.

These finger-prints were photographed and recorded on cards along with the names and other information about each person whose imprints the cards bore. Dornay, who had arranged the scheme, thus accumulated a large number of finger-prints and data of guests who never dreamed that they were being recorded exactly as convicted criminals are. The detective had let these records accumulate, hoping to be saved the trouble of having to work further on them. But he knew now his trap had been sprung and the bird would never return to that particular snare.

So Dornay and a staff of assistants went to work on the finger-prints and looked up each of them in the records of French criminals already recorded in Paris and in other cities. Secret pasts of several men and women who enjoyed exceedingly respectable reputations were thus brought to light.

But of the six or seven cases thus revealed only one interested Dornay. One set of the finger-prints was also found in the files of the Paris police, and identified as those of Eugene Coriot, convicted of clever swindles involving the sale of faked and forged paintings. He had served three years, left prison, and was never heard from again—until his finger-prints on a wine-glass at one of the Aragio soirées brought him to Dornay's notice.

Dornay went to work investigating Coriot with the stealth of a cat stalking a rat. He was living in a quiet, tastefully furnished apartment in the Etoile section, alone. He was known as René Fuchs, an Alsatian expert in art and idling, something of a favorite in Etoile drawing-rooms, and apparently possessed of comfortable means.

Secreted in a window across the street from Coriot's house Dornay watched him day after day until he got to know what hours he usually spent away from home. Then one day when Coriot had left Dornay went across the street and with skeleton keys let himself into Coriot's apartment.

The most diligent search failed to reveal the least object taken by the Etoile burglars in any of their numerous jobs. Nor could Dornay find anything that directly proved anything damaging to Coriot. The detective was about to give up the search in despair when in a bureau drawer he saw among a lot of modish gloves one pair of silk gloves quite worn.

It is doubtful if a Scotland Yard man, trained though he

is to consider every possibility of a clew, no matter how remote, would have yielded to the bit of intuition on which Dornay now acted. He took up a nail file from Coriot's dresser and with it rubbed away at the thumb of the left glove until it was almost worn through; almost, but not noticeably so.

Then he went into Coriot's bedroom. On a little table by the side of the bed stood a water carafe and a tumbler from which Coriot drank before bed and on arising. With a silk handkerchief Dornay polished them perfectly clean. Then he slipped out of the apartment.

The following day he waited again till Coriot left and again let himself into his apartment. With the utmost care he took up Coriot's carafe and tumbler in his gloved hands, left in their places exact duplicates he had brought along, and departed with his booty. At police headquarters white powder was sprinkled on the surface of the carafe and the tumbler, and the camel's hair finger-print brush was used.

The finger-prints thus found were matched up with those on the wineglass in the Aragio soirée and with the prints of Coriot, the vender of faked paintings. Dornay had as yet gained nothing new by all this; but he had made absolutely sure of the identity of Coriot. Then he waited.

Several weeks passed. Then one morning another Etoile home was robbed with the familiar features of the former burglaries—expert workmanship, expert selection of art objects, and discrimination shown against anything that would not harmonize with the furnishings of that imaginary palace pictured by Dornay's art dealer.

Dornay brought along the best finger-print man in the Paris detective service.

"Listen, you have here the most delicate job of your life," he told him. "I am hoping to find finger-prints. But they may be so exceedingly faint that unless you work with the finesse of a needle point you will miss them."

They went to work with microscopic care. The finest gray powder was sprinkled on neutral colored surfaces, black on light surfaces, white on dark. With a camel's hair brush the finger-print man gently flicked away at the powder that did not adhere. Sure enough, delicate telltale lines of powder began to emerge in those characteristic patterns which are to the finger-print man what the scent of quarry is to the bloodhound.

Faint almost to the point of invisibility, there was yet enough there to work on, after the prints were magnified and

photographed. Every one of them was the imprint of a left thumb. It was the thumb of Coriot.

It was with this hope that Dornay had filed thin the fabric on Coriot's glove thumb. He knew that the lines of perspiration which make up a finger-print can on occasion penetrate a very thin layer of porous fabric. Coriot, not knowing that his thumb was only partially protected, worked on in the gloves he used on his jobs and signed the authorship of his latest exploits more surely than if he had written his name.

The moment Dornay read the verdict he jumped into a taxi and rode to where one of his colleagues was camping on Coriot's trail, presumably without the latter's knowledge. It was at an afternoon at the home of a member of the Chamber of Deputies. Dornay's man, watching the house from across the street, nodded as Dornay came up.

"He is still there," he told Dornay.

"Are you sure?" Dornay asked.

"Yes. The party is still early and no one left except a young woman who got faint and had to be helped to her taxi."

"Hm. Well, go in there and ask for M. René Fuchs. If you get him, arrest him. I'll wait out here."

Dornay's man, who was not a full-fledged detective, but a rather obvious policeman detailed for this task in plain clothes, was quite flattered at being given the responsibility of arresting Coriot. He mounted the steps of the house, rang the bell, was admitted by the housemaid, and asked to see M. Fuchs.

"Tell him to come out into the hall," the man said. "There is no need to disturb the whole party."

The maid went in and came back with an envelope.

"M. Fuchs seems to have gone," she said, "though it's strange I did not see him leave. But he left this note for some one he expected would ask for him."

"He's left?" cried the policeman in consternation. "Impossible! I was watching the front of the house!"

He tore the note open and read:

DORNAY:

You're a man of intelligence, but really you don't credit me with any. Don't you suppose I took means to find out who was working on this case? Once I knew it was you it was not so difficult to realize what was really behind that Aragio domicile, with its sudden arrival on the scene.

Poor Touchon! I simply *had* to have some foolish pigeon to spring the trap. I knew that once you took him off to the station I could

come and nibble at the bait safely. But you hurt my vanity when you set such a thickhead to watch me as the poor fool who is perhaps still waiting for me to come out.

My compliments to you for your near-success!

C.

Dornay's man rushed out of the house and gave him the note. He read it. The poor young policeman, expected a storm and braced himself for it. Instead Dornay said mildly:

"It will be interesting to know just how he got away. Let's go in and see."

They interviewed the hostess, who was greatly agitated by now.

"I don't know what to make of it," she told Dornay excitedly. "Mlle. Saurel, who came to the tea with M. Fuchs, suddenly felt faint and I let her go to my room and lie down. Half an hour later she came out, her cloak collar about her face, and seemed so ill she couldn't speak, and could only gesture that she wanted to go home. I looked for M. Fuchs, but he could not be found. I wanted my husband to see her home, but she shook her head violently. So my husband saw her down to a taxi—"

"Suppose we take a look for her in your room," Dornay interrupted.

The hostess stared indignantly at the obviously amused detective, but led the way to her room. When they opened the door they found an exceedingly attractive young woman, Mlle. Saurel, comfortably clad in the hostess's peignoir, lying in bed, reading a novel, and smoking a cigarette with every evidence of enjoyment. She was Coriot's mistress; had pretended to be sick; had changed clothes, or rather given Coriot hers to put on when he followed her into the room; and was now calmly asking for the loan of clothes to go home in.

Paris had its laugh at Dornay over the episode. Dornay apparently was chagrined; at least in public. But privately he seemed little disturbed. He had not been as stupid as Coriot imagined. The "thickhead" of a policeman who had trailed Coriot so obviously had been selected for the task by Dornay precisely *because* he looked so "thickhead." Having eluded him easily Coriot thought he had eluded all.

But one of Dornay's cleverest friends on the detective force was the real shadow, and kept well out of sight. And from him Dornay was still receiving messages that told him where Coriot could be had any time Dornay wanted him.

Dornay wanted him of course. But he first wanted Coriot's collection of loot. Once arrested, Coriot would never reveal

the hiding place of all the choice things he had stolen. So Dornay sprang the trap apparently, let Coriot escape, and hoped that his refuge would prove to be also the hiding place of his loot. But thus far Coriot had not revealed it. Dornay possessed his soul in patience, while waiting word from his colleagues.

One of these colleagues was a young woman, who was keeping watch not over Coriot, but his mistress, the charming, brilliant, rather spoiled Mlle. Saurel, who had helped him escape by her ruse at the afternoon tea. Dornay's feminine colleague, a clever Prussian actress of less talent on the stage than in the employ of Dornay, played under his guidance a difficult rôle with Mlle. Saurel.

She had no difficulty meeting her, for she simply went to Mlle. Saurel's house and asked to see her. Mlle. Saurel, keenly on guard, had her admitted.

"Mlle. Saurel," Dornay's assistant said bluntly, "I have come to betray Dornay. My motive is revenge. He has betrayed me. He has played on my affections so long as it amused him. Now that he has found some one else I no longer count. I will let no man play fast and loose with me. He thinks that because he is of the *service de sûreté* that he is safe from punishment.

"But he is counting without me. I know that he is set on capturing your lover, M. Coriot. I know—for he told me much—that at the present moment one of his men is shadowing M. Coriot at Huyères—"

Mlle. Saurel turned pale. Huyères was where Coriot was hiding for the time, safely as she and he thought.

"I know," went on Dornay's agent, "that Dornay will win much reputation if he captures your lover. I do not want him to capture M. Coriot. I do not want him to win advancement. For, every man to him is gain to *her!* I advise you to telegraph M. Coriot to fly. Dornay little dreams who it is that is spoiling his little plan for him, the miserable betrayer! And I will betray him in turn.

"For a better man than Dornay loves me now—Dornay's best friend and closest co-worker. It is through him that I learn of every step Dornay makes and I will see to it that Dornay rues the day he threw me over for that green-eyed woman!"

Mlle. Saurel studied her visitor but said not a word.

"It is the man who loves me that is watching your own lover at this moment. He is playing the part of a Swiss-

French art dealer and is friendly now with M. Coriot. I am sorry to give him away, but he would not gain anything by capturing your lover. Dornay would see to it that no one but himself got all the credit. Tell your lover to fly!"

Mlle. Saurel rose. "I don't understand anything of what you've been saying. Good afternoon!"

The other left in an excellent imitation of disgust at Mlle. Saurel's stupidity.

Mlle. Saurel did some quick thinking. It was safe neither to telephone nor to telegraph. But since the police knew where her lover was, there would be no harm in making all haste to go to him and warn him.

She snatched up an overnight bag, took the first train south, arrived at Huyères, and burst into her lover's room.

"Pierre—!" And she told him what she had learned.

The slender, wiry, keen-faced man controlled himself with an effort. "So that Goujon is a *flick*, is he? Well, he shall 'dine' with us to-night!" he said grimly.

"Goujon" did dine with Coriot and his mistress that night; and apparently dined and wined too well. For he fell asleep at the table, and it took a doctor half the night to bring him out of the unconsciousness into which the drugged wine had sent him.

By that time Coriot and his lady had had time to pack their things, get into a machine, ride to the Italian border at Mentone, hire a launch, and get into the Italian Riviera by water. It was night. They knew the boatman and were sure they were not followed, so convinced were they that by drugging "Goujon" they had wiped out the trail behind them. Which was Dornay's hope that they would think that.

For so long as Coriot thought himself safe, he would remain at Huyères. Dornay's trick with "Goujon" was to get Coriot to fly and to think himself safe from pursuit.

In the thrust and parry of the duel of wits between himself and Coriot, Dornay won to the extent of finding himself one night with four detectives and three Italian *carabinieri* knocking at the door of an exquisite little villa high up on a hillside in the Italian Riviera. A faint light in one of the windows went out instantly. But no one came to the door.

Dornay threw a stone through the window where the light was seen and shouted up:

"Let us in, Coriot, or we'll have to smash the door!"

There was a long pause. Then a man's voice replied:

"If you enter the house I shall shoot at a little box I

have here. Then there will be an explosion. And a lot of beautiful things you are interested in will be smashed to powder—a great pity!”

“I don’t believe you, Coriot!” Dornay retorted. “If you didn’t love those things you would have sold them. You won’t smash them, though you will fight for your life. We’re coming!”

He signaled, and a heavy garden bench in the hands of four men made kindling wood of the door. The men of the arresting party, revolvers in hand, rushed into the hall and were met with a salvo of shots from two revolvers blazing at them from the dark at the head of the stairs.

There was a furious duel for some moments; then a cry; then only one revolver kept firing on the floor above. But Coriot’s voice, shrill with pain, called out:

“We surrender! I’m hit! Suzanne, stop firing!”

“No!” came the voice of Mlle. Saurel, and with it more shots from her.

“Dornay, don’t hurt her! I’ll get her to stop firing!”

The men below, glad of a parley, let up on their attack, though they kept deep in the dark. They heard Coriot’s voice pleading with Suzanne that as he was wounded badly, it would do her no good to continue.

“Then we will die together, and the things will go with us! I’ll blow them up!”

“No, Suzanne, no!” Coriot cried in anguish. “Not those beautiful things I got for you! I won’t have them destroyed!”

Dornay, crouching by the side of the stairs, weapon in hand, did not altogether believe the parley going on above them. But soon they heard Mlle. Saurel’s voice.

“Lights, for God’s sake! I surrender! Pierre is dying!”

Cautiously Dornay crept up the stairs and tossed a box of matches to where the two lovers were presumably huddled on the stairs. The rattle of the box was heard; there was the scratch of a match.

By the light of the match she was holding, Mlle. Saurel, on her knees, was trying to stop the flow of blood in her lover’s chest. Dornay ran up, snatched up two revolvers lying by the woman’s side, and knew the battle was over. Coriot, badly wounded, was carried into the nearest room and given first aid.

Meanwhile Dornay eagerly explored the house. It was a treasure trove, furnished with choice bits of art looted by Coriot from nearly a score of Paris homes.

Coriot’s career of art burglary was a labor of love—love for

Mlle. Saurel. He had promised to make for her a home such as only a millionaire lover of art and beauty could afford to fit up. He had kept his word. He had bought the little villa in the Italian Riviera and little by little, through his taste for art and his skill as a burglar, fitted up a little temple of beauty.

In pursuit of his plan Coriot sometimes engaged criminals to do this or that difficult bit of specialized burglary. But most of the jobs he worked out himself, developing a virtuosity and versatility in burglary almost unparalleled in criminal annals.

Coriot was taken back to Paris, tended so well that he did not die of his wound, and was eventually given a comparatively light sentence.

Dornay's reputation thrived by this case. But it was Dornay's reputation that stood out, the work of an individual rather than that of an organization. And therein lies the striking difference between the police of Paris and those of Scotland Yard.

CHAPTER X

THE HUNCHBACK KING

WHEN Abadie was a night and a day old somebody wrapped him in a bundle of rags and left him whimpering behind a pile of cabbages in a corner of Les Halles, the big central markets in Paris. His voice, no stronger than a kitten's came to the ears of a sodden beggar woman, known about the markets as Pink-Eye, who was shuffling to her "home," a cellar hole near the markets.

She, an old rag of humanity herself, fifty years old but looking much more and clad in a wardrobe gathered from refuse heaps, was the only person who ever did anything for Abadie. She peered at the little yowling bundle, finally made out through her one inflamed eye what was making the noise; pondered for some minutes; then picking Abadie and his rags up exactly as she had picked many another discarded bit from refuse heaps, she took the infant to her cellar.

It was not kindness that moved the old crone. Society never showed her any kindness; she would not have recognized the quality if she experienced it; and she had none of it in her meager bones. What she saw in Abadie was an aid in her begging. In the technique of panhandling a baby in one's arms is a help. So Pink-Eye decided that Abadie could earn for her more than the cost of his keep.

It did not cost much, his keep. His cradle was a soap box she stole from the back of a grocery store. The rags that made his bedding and his wardrobe she got where she got her other rags. In the same way she got an old rum bottle and with Abadie in her arms begged of a workwoman some rubber nursing-bottle nipples which her own baby could no longer use.

With Abadie as assistant in begging she induced a dairy dealer in the big market to let her have a bit of skimmed milk for the infant. Pouring the near-milk into the rum bottle Pink-Eye forced one of the used rubber nipples over the neck of the bottle and gave it to Abadie to suck. This was the nearest thing to a mother's care he ever got.

During the day he worked for her, of course. Swathed in a mass of picturesquely squalid rags, squalid both by necessity and by choice on the part of Pink-Eye, since a baby in rags moves the hardest heart to charity, Abadie more than trebled Pink-Eye's takings. The worse the weather the more Abadie's exposure to it enriched Pink-Eye.

Nature so often seems to be inexplicably capricious. Man may breed a rosebud from the choicest vine, give it hothouse protection, scientific care and perfect nourishment; and that rosebud may wither in spite of all. And elsewhere in a back lot in the slums where refuse is dumped, a little weed, its seed blown there heaven knows how, will push through the clinkery earth, writhe past and around rusted tin cans, feed on stagnant puddles and send up its wiry growth with such vitality that it will even grow seed and propagate itself.

It must have been that Abadie was born of the toughest of weed stock. For he did not die, tiny and frail as he was.

One day when Pink-Eye was warming the thin blood in her with raw rum she tried to put Abadie back into the "cradle," stumbled and fell with him. He fell on his back on the cellar stones, but as baby bones are soft he was not killed. Something in his backbone twisted, however.

Pink-Eye did not know it, of course; nor would she have cared much had she known, for the infant only yowled. But that twist in the backbone meant that when the youngster grew up he would be a hunchback.

Pink-Eye's competitors did not fail to observe her increase in prosperity. That was not because she spent more or lived more at ease. For she hoarded everything she could lay her claw-like hands upon; hoarded it for no one knew what purpose but with the passion of a miser.

Her rivals for the alms of passers-by knew, however, she was getting three and four times as much as she used to, for they watched her as rivals watch one another. They knew, too, that it was Abadie who was the cause of her increase in fortune.

In that under pavement life in Paris, where these presumably human beings live like overgrown rats, and often look like them, the moral code of course finds little place. There was a beggar couple, known as Pegfoot and The Onion—the former because he capitalized his crushed foot in begging, his woman because as a beggar she could weep so copiously. They decided that Abadie would be a profitable addition to the family.

One night when all Paris was indoors to escape torrents of

November rain, Pegfoot and The Onion stole into Pink-Eye's cellar and told her *they* would bring up Abadie. When she protested Pegfoot used his crutch on her. He did not mean more than to quiet her protests. But Pink-Eye's heart was not very strong and the blow he struck her snapped her fluttering hold on life.

Pegfoot and his wife spent an hour rummaging among her piles of rags to see if they could find her hidden savings. But failing this they picked up Abadie and his cradle and made their way through the downpour to their own burrow.

Thereafter Abadie worked for them. As to Pink-Eye she was found several days later in her cellar hole, and a blasé city coroner put her death down to "heart failure induced by a fall while intoxicated," and let it go at that. She, the picker of rags, was disposed of somewhat as people dispose of what they wish to throw out as refuse.

In the course of the next half-dozen years Abadie changed owners several times. Pegfoot and The Onion got quite some profit out of him until he was three, when they sold him to a blind beggar, whom Abadie had to lead. One day when the blind man gave Abadie too little of their meal-in-common the youngster quietly wandered away in search of food.

As there was no urgent reason why he should wander back to the blind beggar, like a stray kitten he stayed with another beggar couple who recognized him and gave him some supper. This couple added petty thieving to their means of getting something for nothing and in this Abadie proved useful.

He was an apt pupil, was tiny enough to wriggle through even a small hole in a cellar window and apparently could see in the dark and smell loot as a rat smells cheese.

At six he was a keen-eyed little gnome, with spindly legs and arms, a hump on his back, and pasty complexioned. In his face shrewdness and greed mingled with a strange sensitiveness and at the same time impudence. He had dirty gray eyes, small and brilliant and a high forehead, which in his case meant something.

For he had such an avid intelligence that without a soul showing him anything he was learning to read from street signs, had already learned to count up to forty from watching his beggar owners go over their day's alms; and could read faces amazingly for a child. He knew just when he could be insolent with impunity and when it was dangerous.

The play instinct in animal young is not merely a luxury. Watch a kitten bat a ball of paper about, pounce on it, hit it,

worry it, stalk it, and pounce on it again. To the sentimental it may look merely charming play. But what that kitten is really doing is imitating its parents when these are earnestly getting their food.

That kitten is exercising its muscles, training its eyes and swift nerves for the time when it too will have to get its own mice; though, of course, the kitten is conscious of no such purpose in its play. It simply obeys instinct. Abadie's childhood had as little human care devoted to it as if he were a stray alley kitten.

But nature does not depend upon human care for its operations. Abadie played. He, too, played by imitating his elders and his play would one day serve him for getting his food as they did—with considerable modifications.

He played at begging as a cripple and as a "blind" beggar. He whined when it paid; he was insolent when insolence brought results; he stole when no one was looking, just as his elders did. Then one day he found that his legs, which had speed, could be depended upon to carry him out of reach of crippled beggars no matter how enraged they were. So he took to snatching their coppers and darting off with his loot.

It was partly play with him; partly the thrill of finding himself although deformed yet superior physically to others. And partly it was his particular nature preparing himself for that career of crime which was to give the Paris police so much trouble when Abadie came to maturity.

But it was not merely as a thieving young animal that Abadie was growing up. That avid mind of his which learned to read from street signs and theatrical posters soon found itself hungry to read. He fed on scraps of newspapers and old magazines; discarded reading matter found in the gutter; books of fairy tales he snatched from well-cared for children in the gardens of the Tuilleries when their nurses were not looking; books he stole from the little open-air stalls on the left bank of the Seine.

Abadie devoured these as ravenously as he devoured food, which was ravenously indeed, for he was a creature of powerful greeds.

Youngsters of Abadie's age read dime novels, thrill to them, then go back to their marbles and tops. Abadie read them; thrilled to them; and went on to play them out in real life to the extent that lay in his power. Through some twist in his nature—or was it because life had twisted him so?—to him the villains of the dime novels he read were the heroes,

while the heroes of these stories impressed him only as people who did not deserve to win. He, Abadie, meant to be a hero himself, the kind who preyed on others and would not be frustrated by any goody-goody "hero."

He began on a small scale. At eleven one has to begin on a small scale in such a career as Abadie definitely chose for himself. He had long ago thrown off his career as assistant beggar by the simple process of robbing the beggars who last "owned" him and running off to shift for himself. This he did by petty stealing by day; and living in a cellar with several other young thieves by night.

Rapidly his stealing outgrew the category of petty larceny. Soon he learned to break into stores and homes. By thirteen he committed his first full-fledged burglary and had the satisfaction of knowing that the police had a slight description of him and were looking for him.

By fifteen he had three youths calling him "leader" and acting as subordinates in small burglaries he planned.

By sixteen he and his gang—which now counted half a dozen—perpetrated their first assault, knocking unconscious a night watchman who came on them as they were looting a warehouse.

By seventeen Abadie got his biggest thrill when he plunged his sharp clasp-knife into the ribs of a detective who was stalking him. The detective did not die. But Abadie, like a young tiger, got his first taste of blood—and liked it.

Meanwhile his voracious mind and imagination were devouring riches as avidly as he was looting. He found his way to jungle philosophy as naturally as a beast of prey finds his way to its own kind of food. The savage side of the philosophy of anarchism, of Nietzsche, of each-for-himself-and-the-devil-take-the-hindmost, was good red meat to him. Then he would write out his philosophy in a journal the police eventually found.

At eighteen he wrote: "Life is battle. I strike down whatever opposes me. Society is divided into two camps; those that have and those that have not. Cut off the heads of those that have in order that we may have our turn at having. The strong eat the weak. It is for the police to count the dead."

Soon after that the police began their count. Abadie, who was a jealous chieftain, had a lieutenant by the name of Ketch, a youth little less keen and devilish in courage than Abadie. Abadie suspected that Ketch would not die of sorrow if any-

thing happened to Abadie, as Ketch was ambitious to be leader himself.

In their world to wish for the death of some one is more nearly equal to the deed than elsewhere. So Abadie watched Ketch and chance held his dagger ready.

Ketch had a sweetheart who pleased Abadie's taste—for hunchback though he was Abadie considered himself something of a connoisseur in women. Annette in turn was fascinated by Abadie's ugliness and masterful belief in himself. She told him one day that Ketch had confided in her his intention of putting an end to him soon and assuming the leadership of the gang. Whereupon Abadie waited one dark night till Ketch showed up at a rendezvous with Annette. From the dark he plunged his dagger into his lieutenant's heart.

Meanwhile Abadie was bringing into play as leader the imagination he was so richly feeding through reading. He and his new lieutenant, Gilles, a fiery youngster of sixteen, drew up a written constitution, written in cipher code invented by Abadie. There were thirty-five articles and a penal code in case of the violation of any of the provisions of the constitution.

Then they held a solemn ceremony at which blood from the wrists of the nine members of the band was mixed in a cup with the heart's blood of their latest victim, a jeweler's assistant they had killed in a burglary. With this ghastly ink they signed the constitution and swore allegiance to it. The death penalty was prescribed for the violation of any of seven of its articles. Among the provisions were:

"It is forbidden for any of the band to have a sweetheart for a period longer than one month. It breeds dangerous attachments. Any woman selected by a member of the band for a period of less than one month must pass her time as servant in the household of the chief, subject to his surveillance.

"At the end of the month even if she proves to be trustworthy she must be dismissed; and no other member of the band shall have anything to do with her. If any of the band is found confiding any of the affairs or secrets of our organization to a woman he shall be put to death."

By "trustworthy" Abadie meant that the woman could be depended upon to help the band in their burglaries. They would send such a woman to take a place as domestic servant in a household they intended to rob. If with her help the burglary was successful she was "trustworthy" enough to be

allowed to be with the band for a month. It is a proof of the fear the band struck into the hearts of their women accomplices that not once were they betrayed by any of their discarded mistresses.

Gilles, Abadie's lieutenant, was shot and killed by a householder during a burglary. The gang revenged themselves by killing in turn the householder and his daughter several nights later. The place of Gilles was taken by a newcomer who attracted Abadie's liking by his cold-blooded nature.

This newcomer was a medical student, Lebiez, who gave up his studies soon after he joined the band. But he did not lose whatever it was that first attracted him to the study of medicine.

He and Abadie were out on a "job" together which necessitated their working for some time over a wall safe. The owners were away and the two desperadoes thought they would be able to work undisturbed. But into the room as they worked there sprang a fine looking figure of a man.

"What are you doing—?" he began but never finished. For Lebiez knocked him over the head with a poker and stilled his tongue forever.

"A splendid specimen!" coolly said Lebiez, "I would have liked dissecting when I was at medical school; in fact, I am coming back to-night with my scalpels."

He and Abadie had dinner that night at a famous restaurant. After liqueurs Lebiez rose. "A charming evening, my dear Abadie! Sorry to leave you. But I have a little work to do. It will remind me of my medical school days. I wonder if my scalpels are still good."

Next day he said to Abadie:

"He was a splendid specimen. And I seemed to have lost little of my training."

It was Lebiez who was also nearest Abadie in his taste for writing and putting in words his savage materialist philosophy. In days to come when the police found all the records of the gang they also found Lebiez's memoirs, from which I have selected the following passage as typical:

Such is the fecundity of nature that four or five animals or vegetable species would be sufficient to cover the surface of the earth. But as Malthus has pointed out in his classic demonstration which has taken on the inevitability of natural law, there is not enough food for all. There are not merely five species of animal and vegetable species propagating their kind on this earth, but many times five.

This means that great masses must perish. Equilibrium exists but only by the grace of innumerable hecatombs of slaughtered weak mem-

bers of the different species. This is well defined by Darwin, who calls it the "struggle for survival" and "the survival of the fittest." In France we call it the "vital rivalry."

All this fight is for a place in the sun, at the feeding table. But at the banquet of nature there are not covers enough for all. Each must fight for his place. The strong must stifle the weak. Dog eats dog——"

Between Abadie and Lebiez they devised what they called their "*coup de cornet*" in killing with the dagger. Abadie described it thus in his journal: "You plunge the knife into the throat and turn it right and left. The wound is always fatal."

When Abadie was twenty the police were at work running down his band. The detective in charge of the hunt was a young man named Martin.

Martin was a brilliant youngster who, like many of his fellow detectives of the Paris police, had imagination and intuition rather than the more downright virtues of patience and doggedness of the Scotland Yard man. With these qualities he preferred to work on individual initiative rather than with a team, to gamble rather than to invest conservatively.

His imagination had been engrossed with the shadowy figures of a band of burglars who did not hesitate to murder, who had foiled detection, who were rolling up a long record of unpunished crime and seemed to have brilliant leadership and organization.

Of the leader of that gang there was only the vaguest outline in the minds of the Paris police. From spies among the underworld, from glimpses by terrified householders whose homes were robbed, from the little that detectives up to then had been able to gather of the band, there was some sort of cripple or deformed man at the head of the band, a man who combined keen mind, savage zest, and great skill in the technique of crime. More than that the police did not know either of the leader or of his followers.

Martin asked to be assigned to bring that band to justice. He had a plan, he told his chief, which required his playing a lone hand until he should call for help. He was told to go ahead.

Several days later the boulevard press of Paris was lively with the story of one Perugin, who had escaped prison in the south of France, and who was suspected of being in Paris in hiding. The papers told, though in vague outlines, of an exceptionally bold escape, involving the murder of a prison guard who had befriended him. He was to have died on the guillotine for the murder of a rich aunt who had cut him

off in her will because of his many escapades with the police. There was a bit of description of the man in the papers, particularly of his exceptional size and strength.

Several nights later one of the most exclusive resorts of the underworld in Paris noted a tall, quiet stranger come in and sit down alone to drink. Speculation at once began as to who the stranger was; every stranger was the subject of lively interest in that place. The proprietor, who was exceptionally well informed on every phase of Paris life that interested the police, took a good look at the stranger.

"He looks to me like that man Perugin I read about in the paper a few days ago—the fellow who broke out of jail down in Marseilles. A keen dog, if it's he. I'll see if I can find out."

He strolled over to the stranger and casually asked:

"Come from Marseilles?"

The stranger leaped to his feet, shot his hand to his belt, and snarled:

"What in hell do you care!"

He did not strike, but one could glimpse a knife in his belt and his manner showed it would not take much to make him fight. The proprietor nodded.

"You're a testy bird. Meet some of my friends and drink with us."

The stranger gave his name as François, which was about as illuminating as calling himself John would be under similar circumstances in an American dive. He kept himself aloof and showed his suspicion plainly, his manner being that of a man on guard against the world. But he also seemed harassed with loneliness.

His suspicion finally abated enough for him to join several of the people there in drinking. But he kept a closed mouth. Finally the proprietor said:

"If you're a stranger in Paris, I have some rooms to let in the back of the house. It's a quiet place for those who want—quiet. No questions asked or answered. The right kind of company if you want it. But the rates are rather high."

François thought this over and nodded. "I'll come."

He came with very little baggage next day, a hand satchel containing apparently all he owned. The landlord gave him a room and tried to cultivate his acquaintance further. He had little success. So he decided to find out more in his own way.

When François left for a walk one afternoon the landlord

let himself into his room with a passkey, worked open the lock of François's valise, and examined the contents. They did not reveal much directly. But the proprietor, who was a member of Abadie's band, knew how to deduce much from little.

"He is Perugin," he told Abadie later in the latter's well hidden flat in the *Butte Chaumont* section of Paris.

"Bring him here to a party," Abadie said. "We'll give him a look."

François, who seemed to grow lonelier and more morose every day, was induced to come to a "small and knowing party," at Abadie's house. Abadie himself did not appear at first. But through a peephole he studied François all evening, and compared notes with some of his lieutenants.

The stranger seemed a surly brute but able and daring; for it looked as though he were already operating in Paris on his own. There were rumors of skillful jobs at burglary by some newcomer, and the signs pointed to François.

Before the end of Abadie's party the host himself appeared and made his acquaintance. Abadie pumped him but got little direct information. He did get, however, a favorable impression of the hard caliber of the man. The more he studied him and the more François kept to himself, the more Abadie got interested.

Finally, though with caution, Abadie broached the subject of "partnership in a paying adventure," as he put it. François was hard to interest. But Abadie by now was keen to get him and persevered. It was only after several days of persuasion that François finally consented to join Abadie in a risky but promising burglary at the house of a cabinet minister. Abadie's object was to test François for membership in his band.

The plan of the house to be looted was supplied by a woman who had Abadie's current love and had managed to secure a position as domestic in the house of the wealthy cabinet minister at Neuilly, a fashionable part of Paris. The family of the minister were away for the winter holidays, and it was understood that none but a watchman remained. There were some negotiable bonds, some jewelry, and other valuables to be had if a strong house safe could be cracked open.

Abadie and François, dressed in evening clothes, top-hats, and fur-trimmed overcoats, drove down to the house toward midnight in a stylish little closed car a member of the band stole for the occasion. In Abadie's hands were keys to the house. He and François strolled up to the front door chat-

ting in a matter-of-fact way. Two policemen on bicycles rode past, looked at the two fur-clad, top-hatted gentlemen admitting themselves into the cabinet minister's house with the air of being at home. The agents of the law must have seen nothing wrong in this for they pedaled on without another look.

Abadie knew from the servant just where the watchman would be at that hour, and entered the room without a sound. The watchman's revolver would not speak for the servant had quietly abstracted the bullets. So Abadie had little fear. His black-jack was in his hand as he opened the door. François was at his back, his revolver out and ready.

The watchman was drowsing in his chair as Abadie opened the door. Abadie crept up to him. But suddenly the watchman leaped up, whirled and seized Abadie's wrist. With a twist that almost broke Abadie's slender wrist, he tore the blackjack out of his hand, and hurled Abadie against the wall. Even as he was toppling backward Abadie whipped out his automatic.

To his horror there was only a succession of clicks. Something was wrong with the trigger.

"Kill him!" shrieked Abadie to François through a red mist of rage.

But Abadie failed to hear the expected drum of revolver fire. He saw François standing by the watchman's side, looking down coldly at Abadie. There was now something policeman-like about both the watchman and François that sent a shock through Abadie. He leaped to his feet like a cat and crouched against the wall. From his inside coat pocket he whipped out his sheath knife. His teeth flashed in his dwarf face, his dirty gray eyes gleamed.

"Partners, are you?" he snarled. "Then come and get me!"

François turned his head and over his shoulder called:

"Come in!"

Five heavily built men tramped into the room, revolvers in their hands. François impatiently exclaimed.

"So much artillery show for just one rat! Have you no pride? I'll take care of him!"

Abadie shrieked. "Do you think my band will let you live?"

François advanced slowly to Abadie, his revolver pointing straight at the pit of the stomach, his finger on the trigger, his eyes on Abadie's dagger. "Open your fingers, runt, or I'll

shoot you where it won't kill you, but will mess you up badly!"

Abadie's hand flew up like a cat's, the dagger shot through the air, missed François's heart by inches, and stuck in the wall. François flushed with anger, stuck the revolver back into his pocket and grasped the hunchback with one powerful hand about the slender throat.

"It will give me pleasure to break that crooked back of yours!" he growled; and Abadie felt iron closing about his windpipe. In the hands of the young giant he was like a doll. When he had given himself as lost the hand let up for an instant. He caught a bit of breath.

"I'll make a deal!" Abadie whimpered.

"I thought so," François said.

"I'll give the band up—" Abadie began.

"No good. You'll meet them all at the police station when you get there."

Abadie's agitated eyes took on a crafty look.

"But you haven't got much of a case against them or me. It'll take you a devil of a lot of effort to make it guillotine affairs for them—without my help."

François pretended not to hear, and ordered Abadie handcuffed and taken to the prefecture of police.

But several weeks later, while preparations for trying the band were taking place, one of the prosecutors visited Abadie in his cell.

"What are you willing to do to save your neck?" he asked.

Abadie squinted at him. "Tell you enough to send the rest of the crowd to the guillotine—provided I'm not sent there myself."

The bargain was made, Abadie cleverly arranging it so that the honor of the French court trying the band was involved to insure his escape from death sentence. To draw forth such a promise and bargain, Abadie told bits of information, which served well as samples. The goods he was delivering seemed worth the promise, and Abadie got it.

The band was then tried. But at the crucial moments of the trial it was found that the promise had been bought with faked goods. Abadie's information did not stand the test of cross-examination. He had cheated. The judge was outraged.

"You are making a fool of Justice!" he said sternly to Abadie.

"Exactly!" Abadie grinned. "You see I am the pilot of my

band. I have to do anything that will save them. That's why I am their leader."

He was sent to the penal colony at far-away Caledonia. Here he kept the authorities busy. On his first day he rebelled.

"I hate the bouillon," he shouted. "It's too clear. The eggs are too much cooked. I want wine and hate your water. My health suffers."

His health seemed to have no effect on his defiance. He was locked up in solitary confinement. But the guard found him busy making an effort to escape. He had made a knife of part of a sardine can, cut his trousers into strips, and was fashioning his rope wherein to let himself out of the window. He was taken to the director of the prison, whom he insolently addressed.

"You see, one does not necessarily die just because your courts pronounce the death sentence. And one does not have to stay here forever just because one has been given life sentence."

"What would you do if you had succeeded in making your escape?" the director asked curiously.

"I'd go back to my old life and build up another gang!"

But fever finally put him in a cell whence none escape until some greater Judgment Day. With the Paris police, however, he lives as one of its liveliest memories.

CHAPTER XI

THE GRIM JOKER OF PARIS

THERE is an old story of the old days when whisky barrels dwelt in home cellars in this land and were within the law. A little mouse ventured near the leaky tap of one of these barrels and, the story goes, imbibed a lot of the drippings. When these got in their work on the mouse he reared upon his hind legs and called the echoing caller, "*Now bring on that cat!*"

The most timorous mouse among us humans, harried and harassed, teased and eaten by that great cat, Life, can sound for one glorious moment a shout of defiance to it. But only when we stop caring about it; and with the stopping still have breath enough and humor enough to joke with life. Or play a joke on it. Which is what one mouse of a man did; and thereby made one of the most interesting stories in the annals of the Paris police.

Louis Benet was a slight gray mouse of a man, timid but hungry for life. He wanted love; but women smiled, not with him, but at him. For he was a shrinking figure of a man, too hungry for love to command it and most women want a man for a lover, not a mouse.

He was an "extra" or sort of chorus man in a small boulevard theater in Paris; and the slighter his talents the more a man like Benet dreams of great success on the stage of life. But dreams were all that he achieved. For reality daily and hourly tripped him as he walked with his head full of dreams and yearnings, and down he would crash to the snickers and contemptuous laughter of the world about him.

A mouse like Benet will take crumbs gratefully, since he cannot get a loaf. So he made friends with other human mice like himself, failures, never-to-be men, dreamers who could not realize their most modest dreams, chorus men and broken-down human litter such as one finds around a small Paris boulevard theater.

To such people there seems but one way to meet the ruthless reality of life—that is to forget it. And because alcohol and narcotics help such folk to forget the unendurable, they will often trade their doubtful privilege of living for a drink or a pinch of cocaine.

Louis Benet, however, did not resort to these substitutes. Somewhere in him, unknown to him even, but later to be known to the world, there was a hidden strain of resistance. He preferred to go on hungering for a beautiful love to come, for success on the stage, which he would lay at the feet of the woman who might bring him that love.

He did not barter his dreams for drink or drugs. But so sorry was he for his friends, who were only too glad to get these means of forgetting that he did not blame them for doing what they could to endure life.

At that time the police were carrying on a campaign against the drug traffic and were on the trail of a ring of men who were the center and leaders of the traffic. The activity of the police made it much harder for all drug addicts to get their supply, and among Benet's friends there was much distress. Finally a group of them came to him and said:

"Louis, none of us dare move to get the stuff we want. We are being watched so closely that 'they' won't sell us any while this police hunt is on. But we die without it. You don't use the stuff. Everybody knows it. Nobody watches you. Won't you, for God's sake, go to 'them' and get us a supply! We implore you!"

Benet hesitated. He wished they had not asked him. He did not want to be the agent for the abominable traffic. But he looked at their drawn faces and his nerves, tortured by hunger for life, knew what these nerves must suffer in their torturing hunger for the substitutes for life.

So he gave in, and said he would do as they asked. But he would not take a centimo for his risk, and gave notice that only for a short time would he do this thing for them.

They told him where to go, what to do and say, intrusted to him their money and waited for him to return. He did as directed and after much caution was admitted to the outer room of the office of the president of a small bank in the heart of Paris. There a big man with a brutal face and glittering eyes took Benet into a corner and said:

"Listen, you! If ever the police get hold of you as a suspect, they will question you. If you don't answer, they will bully you and perhaps beat you. Here is my advice to you.

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Let them break your leg before you tell them about this place or me.

"Do you hear? Because the police will never kill you for refusing to tell on me. But as sure as there is night, as soon as you inform on us—if ever you do—your neck will be broken by any of twenty men who work for me. Here is your stuff!"

The man led Benet into the inner office. The heavy steel door of the safe was half open, so that the world apparently might see its contents, packages that looked like bundles of mortgages and title deeds. Handing him one of these packages, the man with the brutal face fixed his glittering eyes on Benet.

"Remember!" he growled.

The menace in those eyes, the knowledge he had of the gang of cutthroats working for this drug ring, the terror they struck into his timorous soul made Louis sure he would never forget.

He delivered the package of "securities" to his friends and said:

"I want nothing more to do with this. I'm very sorry, dear friends, but I must refuse to go there again!"

But the mischief had been done. The police got hold of one of the poor devils with some of the drug in his possession, which Benet had brought. From this man they forced a confession that it was Louis who had brought the narcotics. One morning, therefore, a detective from headquarters walked into Louis's hallroom and said:

"Come along!"

Louis was terrified. At police headquarters they said to him:

"Take your choice—prison or tell us where you got the stuff!"

Louis remembered the man with the piercing eyes and his sincere threat. He knew that even if the police guarded him, there would come a time when the drug ring would get him. The police, stern though they were, did not look as threatening as that man did; and the most they threatened was prison. Whereas the other promised death. So between the two terrors Louis chose the lesser; and desperately kept his mouth closed.

The police badgered, bullied, threatened. No use. A greater terror defeated their threats. Finally the subordinates called in their chief, a higher officer in the *service de sûreté*, the detective branch of the Paris police. He was a shrewd judge of character. He dismissed the others and sat down to a quiet talk with Louis.

"You don't look like one who would traffic in this thing, especially at the expense of your friends," he said kindly. "Now, why don't you help us break up this terrible traffic?"

Kindness was harder to resist than cruelty and threats. But not enough to overcome the fear of death.

"Because, monsieur, they threatened to kill me, and I know you will not be able to prevent them from doing it, if I tell on them," he said, his teeth chattering.

The detective official, let us call him Monsieur X, since I have been asked not to give his right name, studied Louis. Then he realized that police threats would never make Louis sign his own death warrant. Monsieur rose, his eyes averted.

"Well, it isn't fair to make you do something which you are convinced means your death," he said. "Also we happen to know that it was your first offense; that you gained nothing by it; that you did it out of sheer pity. In the circumstances it isn't just for us to prosecute you. Go. But don't do this thing again."

Louis went, somewhat stunned at the unexpected kindness of the police. He did not know, of course, that they were not through with him. But as he was not called upon to get any more drugs for his friends; as the drug ring seemed undisturbed in its traffic; and as no one troubled him for the next week and more, Louis put his recent terrible experience out of his mind and soon actually forgot it.

What helped him forget was a new and wonderful thing that was happening to him. The owner of the little theater at which he was a pitifully paid "extra" was Madame Leah Carbutti, an Italian, who had come to Paris with nothing and by dint of her coarse good looks, heartless exploitation and a certain domineering quality had made herself the owner of this little theater.

She produced whatever would pay—melodrama, farce, tawdry reviews, anything she could cook up on the little capital she had. She employed such men as Louis not because of their talents, but because she could pay them so little and make them work so hard.

For years Louis obeyed her like a slave. For he was doubly her slave, being dependent on her for bread and butter; and also because he was secretly in love with this highly colored, dominating, black-eyed, red-lipped woman. And for years she had treated him like a despised slave.

Now suddenly there came a change over her. She smiled on him; said kind words about the way he did a small part

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in the melodrama she was rehearsing; patted his cheek when he stammered his thanks, and asked his advice about the principal rôle in the melodrama.

"If you think you could do the part, I've half a mind to give you a chance!" she said.

Louis's senses reeled. After so many years of hunger—to have love smile at him, to have success beckon to him!

"I would give my life to try the part!" he said. And for once the phrase meant something. For Louis really felt at last that he could be equal to surmounting his terror of death; that he would be willing to stake his life, if he could win both Madame Leah's love and at the same time success on the stage where he had played only the humblest of parts. He told her so, his voice choking with sincerity.

"Well, any one who feels that way is bound to win!" she said. "You shall rehearse the part. For I like you, Louis; always did like you. And I like the way you resisted the police and did not tell them what they wanted to know. Come and dine with me to-night after the show."

For the following two weeks Louis did not know whether he was on earth, in heaven, or in hell. It did not seem possible that he should be rehearsing the leading part in the melodrama, the rôle of the hero with whom the heroine, played by Madame Leah herself, was desperately in love. It did not seem possible that Madame Leah should be tender with him after rehearsals as she did.

In a few days, too, would come the night when the curtain would rise, the critics would come and perhaps—who knows?—would like him in his new rôle and write next day about it in the boulevard press.

And it was the torment of hell to have Madame Leah bring her red lips close to his; then suddenly, capriciously snatch them away, bring him groveling to her feet. Then she would almost forgive him, almost say the words he would have died to hear—and again she would snatch lips and promise away!

At last he could bear it no longer. They were alone in her apartment in back of the theater. He broke down and sobbed:

"I will kill myself, if you keep up this torture! I love you and my life is yours, if you want it. But if you don't want it, for pity's sake tell me so truly and I will go away. But this—this, I cannot endure any longer!"

She looked slyly at the head buried in her lap.

"Do you really love me, Louis?" He did not answer. He need not answer. "Then prove it to me, Louis. If I have not

given you the love you want, it is because perhaps I, too, have suffered. I have met so many who use their love as instruments for getting something out of me. I must have a proof of your love."

He rose haggard. "How can I prove it, if you don't believe me?" he asked.

"You can prove it by telling me what you refused to tell the police!"

He gave her a startled look. "Are you working for the police? Is that why you have led me on?" he demanded quivering.

She laughed loudly. "Why, what an accusation to make! Aren't you ashamed!"

He looked at her steadily and spoke slowly, with an impressiveness that was wholly new to his mouselike nature.

"Leah, if I thought you have done all this—only to use me—"

She dug her fingers into his hair and drew his head down to her lap so that he could not see her eyes.

"Don't be silly," she said. "I am not as fond of the police as all that. But you refused to tell them how you got to the head of the drug ring; refused out of fear of death. And I want to see if your love of me is as strong as your fear of death, that's all. So tell me."

Louis did not answer at first. Then his words, muffled, came from him, slowly, weightily, as from one who speaks from the depths of life's desire.

"I was afraid of death then. I no longer am. Life or death have no longer any terror for me. Yet more than ever I would want to live—if I thought you really love me."

"I do. Now tell me."

He studied her for some moments. Then he told her of his visit to the headquarters of the drug ring. He withheld nothing. She patted his head and kissed him absently.

"You're a dear kid," she said. "But you must go now. To-morrow night we open in your play—and you must rest. I, too."

The hour of Louis Benet's fears and hopes came galloping and frightened him as badly as though a team of runaway horses were coming down upon him. This, together with his lack of talent worked havoc with the poor actor.

In scenes meant to thrill the audience he roused only gales of derisive laughter. Under the waves of derision went also Madame Leah. When the final curtain went down, she ran

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off to her apartment, giving Louis only a savage look and a muttered oath in Italian.

The poor fellow, horrified at his failure, never needed the consolation of love so badly in his life. He knocked and knocked at her door until she flung it open furiously.

"What the devil do you want?" she rasped. "Get out of here or I'll have the police come and throw you out of the theater, you—!" Scabrous insults poured from her carmined lips and she tried to slam the door shut.

But Louis quietly put his foot inside. "I am coming in," he said. "I want to talk to you!"

Actually he forced himself in, turned the key in the door, put it in his pocket and with a strange light in his eyes confronted her.

"Sit down, Leah," he said softly. And somehow she had to obey. "Sit down and tell me. Don't you really love me?"

She sat down on a divan, threw her head back and laughed until the tears came to her eyes.

"I love you? *You?* Why, you poor joke! Only you're too stupid to recognize a joke on yourself. I, Leah Carbutti, owner of this theater and everything in it, love *you?* A poor worm I kept only because it cost so little to keep you? No, my great artist, I do not love you. I never can look at you without my lips curling with contempt.

"And I would not have kept up this joke but for Monsieur X, of the *service de sûreté*, who wanted to worm out of you information about the cocaine ring! It was he who proposed this joke. But now I am tired of it and you. Get out of here!"

Louis had turned red and white by turns. Then he sank to a chair. His head was bowed. His shoulders began to shake. But soon to Mme. Carbutti's astonishment she saw that he was shaking with laughter. Soon, too, he began to roar, tears streaming from his eyes, his words coming in gasps.

"A joke! Why, of course, a joke! The best joke I ever heard of, the greatest joke I ever experienced! Help me laugh, Leah, or—or I die!"

For he was laughing at the greatest joke in the world—life to those who no longer care for it.

It took some time before he managed to control himself sufficiently to obey her furious order for him to get out of her sight forever. He went, and she locked the door on him. She saw him still shaking with laughter.

It came out months later that next morning he read two

items in a newspaper, items which interested him tremendously. One was a short but biting review of his "ridiculous" playing of the hero in the new piece at Mme. Carbutti's theater, a joke worth going to see, the critic said.

The other item, a front page affair, told of the sensational arrest and rounding up of the chiefs of the drug ring, of the raid on the office of a hitherto respectable bank, of the fight that took place there, in which one of the drug gang was killed, and two gangsters and two policemen wounded.

Three days later another sensation appeared on the front pages. Mme. Carbutti had been murdered. When found she was still clad in the rainbow-hued costume of *Zaza*, that hectic lover of life, which Mme. Carbutti had played only a little before she was killed. She must have been murdered immediately after she entered her apartment in the rear of the theater.

Her body was found in a posture that suggested a weird thought. Just so would a body be placed if one wanted to represent it as laughing, with head thrown back in merriment. Only her head was thrown back because her throat had been cut. A note pinned to her many-colored bodice carried this thought further.

"A good joke, my dear. But isn't it too bad you can't laugh out loud?"

The murder created a furor. The police seemed to have a theory as to who had committed it, for they hunted down every member of the cocaine ring with redoubled energy. But after weeks of investigation they had to admit that they neither had the murderer nor any clew to him.

Then one day there came into police headquarters a queer looking fellow, who stammeringly confessed to killing Mme. Carbutti. The police, stung by the comments of the press about their failure to run down the murderer, naturally felt jubilant and gave out the news to the press that they had caught the criminal.

But when on investigation it was discovered that the supposed murderer was only a half witted fellow who had been promised a hundred francs to play this joke on the police, the newspapers waxed more sarcastic than ever. The half wit was thrown out of detention prison with little gentleness.

Several days later there was a banquet given at one of the famous restaurants in Paris in honor of a new chief of the Paris police. Government officials, former police chiefs, mem-

bers of the diplomatic corps in glittering uniforms, notables of all kinds were there. The press had a table of its own with reporters from practically every big newspaper and some foreign correspondents on hand to report the occasion.

As the speechmaking proceeded bouquets of eloquence were bestowed on the retiring police chief, prophecies of great accomplishments in the hunting down of criminals made of the incoming chief. No one, of course, mentioned such unpleasant things as the failure of the retiring chief's detective service to run down the murderer of Mme. Carbutti.

Nor did any recall the hoax played on the police by the half wit who had "confessed" to the murder. But between the reporters there passed knowing winks whenever an orator delivered too flowery praise of the work of the detective bureau in the recent past.

The banquet was guarded by a specially assigned force of police, in honor of the occasion. There walked up to the officer in charge of the guard a thin, brisk, little man, dressed in fashionable dinner garb.

"I am from the *Journal*. I have instructions to give to our reporter at the banquet. But as I am in a hurry, perhaps you will do it for me. Please tell him to—"

"*Monsieur*, I'm not your messenger. Tell it to him yourself."

The stranger was thus sent into the banquet hall. Here his briskness changed to a leisurely manner. He was seen strolling from guest to guest, whispering discreetly, asking if the service was satisfactory. Guests nodded, then turned again to listen to the speakers.

In this way the stranger made his way to the speaker's table, which was on a slightly raised platform. Leaning over to the toastmaster, he whispered:

"After this speaker gets through, please let me make an announcement of great interest to every one here. It is a pleasant surprise I have been delegated to announce by the syndicate of theatrical workers."

The toastmaster glanced at the confident mien of the little man, hesitated, then nodded. When the speaker was done, he rose and addressed the guests.

"There is an announcement of interest. I will ask the *monsieur* here to introduce himself, as he desires to spring a pleasant surprise."

Every face turned to the slightly built man who took his place by the toastmaster's side with such self-confidence. But

the instant he began to speak it was plain that he had won his confidence from many glasses of strong drink.

"I love the police," he said. "I love them almost enough to forgive them for a little trick they played on me. For, you see, I played one in return on them. For three months I have led them a fruitless chase. But now I have not the heart to keep up the joke. So I am here to retrieve their painful failure to capture the murderer of Mme. Cabrutti—I mean Mme. Cartubbi—no, Carbutti. I am the man who killed her!"

There were gasps of astonishment, ripples of laughter. The little man did not seem capable of killing a mouse; he seemed a mouse himself, which made the joke on the police all the better. Attendants hurried over and hustled him to the anteroom to the accompaniment of the buzz of comment and the tittering of the guests.

In the anteroom he was held by three policemen, while three others fought to keep out the score of reporters who were trying to crowd into the room. A captain of police hurried in and glared at the apparently drunk little man.

"How dare you!" he thundered. "And what is your impudent purpose in doing this thing?"

The little man blinked at him solemnly. "Why, to help you catch the murderer of Mme. Cabr—no, Catrubbi—no, Carbutti!"

The captain thought of the reporters clamoring to be let in on the scene. He thought of the zest with which they would dilate on the incident; of the sauce of sharp wit they would cook up for it in the papers; of the jokes that would be made in the theatrical reviews. He whispered to a colleague:

"The less fuss we make of this business, the less the papers can make of it!"

His colleague agreed with a nod. The captain whispered instructions to a husky gendarme. The latter took the little man firmly by the shoulder, marched him out the back way and out into the street. Then he drew back and his foot caught the little man where it sent him sprawling far out into the street.

"This will teach you to play jokes on the police!" the gendarme growled.

The stranger picked himself up just as the reporters came running out, in time to hear the policeman's words. A taxi was passing, and the stranger hailed it and got on the running board. Blowing a kiss, he cried:

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"I *am* well taught, *cher ami*, how to play a joke on the police!"

And before the reporters could get at him he was whirled off in the taxi.

The papers next day made gay comment on the incident, but agreed that the police had done well to make so little of the practical joke on them.

But a day later every newspaper in Paris received a mimeographed copy of the following letter, which had been forwarded to Monsieur X, who was still with the detective service. It read:

DEAR MONSIEUR X:

Do you like a good joke? Here is one. You wanted information on the Cocaine Ring. I had it. Your police tried to make me give it to you. But I was so terrified of death, which the gang threatened, that I was not afraid of your threats and did not tell. Whereupon you decided to play a little joke on me. You got Mme. Carbutti to pretend that she loved me, to give me a leading part in the theater where I had been only a despised "extra."

Well, your joke worked, and I told her, out of love, what I did not tell you out of fear. Then she cast me out, explaining at the same time your joke, her joke, the joke that life played on me. I agree it is a good joke. And one good joke deserves another. So on the night of November 7, I stole into Mme. Carbutti's apartment and waited till she came in from her performance of "Zaza"—it was a joke as a performance.

When she saw me, I pretended that I came to kill her, but had lost courage. She sat down on the couch and, leaning her head back, roared with laughter at my pleading to be taken back into her love. She, of course, did not know I still kept my knife. When you found her, her head was still in the posture of laughter. But she laughs no longer.

I had still my joking account to square with you, gentlemen of the police. So I sent the half wit to confess to the murder. You threw him out. Then I felt it was safe to confess to the murder myself. I did it at the banquet of police chiefs.

Was not that a good joke?

But I am tired of it, as I am tired of life itself. Come and get me at the following address.

LOUIS AMERON HELIE BENET.

There was a rushing of detectives and reporters in taxis to the address given. A janitress met them.

"Yes, the strange little *monsieur* waited till half an hour ago. He did not tell me for whom he was waiting. But he said that I was to give this address to any one who asked for him."

All the way across Paris rushed the police and the reporters, too, while their newspapers waited breathlessly for the flash

over the wires that would tell of the capture of this remarkable murderer. But when the new address was reached a little boy was found with a note in his hands, "to be given to a lot of people who would come rushing up to the house."

"I apologize," the note read. "But I want to say good-by to a dear friend and I have to hurry off to—" Still another address on the other side of Paris was given.

It became apparent by now that a practical joker was at work. But there was such circumstantial evidence in the letter of its genuineness that the police dared not risk letting the joker escape without a thorough investigation. So the whole crowd dashed off again to the new address, as the trail was so hot.

This time a note was found pinned on the door of a little apartment near the top of Montmartre.

Sorry again. Have to find my friend, who seems to be as lively as a flea. But if you think I am still playing a joke, that is your risk. I will wait for you in the middle of Pont Neuf, the bridge on which I have dreamed so many vain dreams as I stood looking over my beloved Seine. If you come, you can have me. If you don't, the Seine shall have me. Life is too huge a joke for me to bear it much longer.

Here half the reporters quit the chase, convinced that the whole thing was a good joke, but getting stale. So these went back to write what they knew of it. The other reporters together with a squad of police piled into a taxicab and rode pell-mell for Pont Neuf.

Traffic was not great on the bridge as the taxicab whirled up. So that a lone figure standing in the middle of the span apparently waiting for some one, was visible for some distance.

"It's the man who announced himself at the police banquet!" a reporter cried.

The slight man with the quizzical smile waited until the foremost of the police was within ten feet of him. Then with a terrific effort he got to the broad stone parapet of the bridge and stood up.

"Good-by, you joke of a world. It's I who play one on you!"

With that he launched out into the space and shot down into the water.

A policeman, who had won medals for rescues from drowning, vaulted over the parapet and dove after Benet. But he came up without him.

It was not till late that afternoon that the body was found.

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But when a policeman tried to lift it out of the water, he was astonished at its great weight. It was then that Benet's really last joke was discovered. He had weighted his pockets with stones.

CHAPTER XII

A MUSEUM OF CRIME

IMAGINE the curio room of a theatrical producer of successful melodramas in which are kept the forged wills, the automatic revolvers, the stolen pearls, the secret panels, and scores of other stage "properties" which have thrilled audiences in the past. Then suppose as you look there goes up a curtain that with each relic unfolds the "big scene" in which it once played a part. Such a visit would be interesting.

But now imagine this room overlooking the beautiful river Seine. It is bright with sunlight and gleaming with glass cases in which you see a bewildering olla podrida of objects—queer looking revolvers and knives; messages written in blood; a set of horse's teeth, artificial; a big bonbon box that is really an infernal machine; innocent looking canes of every description that conceal anything but innocent implements inside them; simple looking keys that unlock all kinds of doors; curious machines whose uses can scarcely be guessed.

The great castle-fronted building in which this room is housed is the headquarters of the Paris police. And connected with each curio you see in this room is a *real* melodrama in which human passions really burned, real blood flowed, real detectives—the clever, temperamental detectives of the Paris police force—played the sleuths and French criminals, the most colorful, dashing, picturesque, imaginative devils on earth, played the villains in each story.

Then let M. Franceschi, curator of this room and head of the detective school of the Paris police, tell you these stories. You will then have the experience I had when I visited the curio room of the Paris police.

A giant ear, big as a child, takes your eye as you enter, different segments of the ear colored blue, red, yellow, and white, each segment marked with a letter. It is not a relic of crime, but is part of the detective school, M. Franceschi explained to me.

"A detective is sent out to find a wanted criminal," he said. "He may have a photograph of the man in his pocket. Along

comes a man who, feature for feature, seems to be the man in the photograph—and yet may be the wrong man. Look at these two photographs, for instance.”

He showed me them. I took it for granted that they were different photographs of the same man.

“They are not of the same man,” M. Franceschi said; and I politely tried to believe him, “which shows that as far as our work goes nature is not very considerate, giving different individuals the same face and subjecting us detectives to the risk of heavy damage suits for false arrest. Nature tries to make amends to us by giving every individual on earth a different finger-print. But that is not enough for a detective on the lookout for a given individual in a crowd.

“You can’t very well stop every passer-by and ask him to let you finger-print him. But again Nature has kindly helped us and has given us the human ear. You may think her purpose was to enable men to hear,” he smiled. “But its more interesting use to us is as a means of identification. This huge ear you see on the wall is a model of what I might call a typical ear. But there is no such thing.

“There are no two ears on earth exactly alike. That makes ears even more individual, if possible, than finger-prints. Short of lopping off his ear a criminal can be absolutely identified by his ear no matter what he does to the rest of his person. That is why in our detective school we study the ear so minutely.

“How minutely, you can see by the fact that this model is divided into twenty different parts. Each convolution, lobe, and segment has its own name and description—twenty of them to the ear. Our men are taught to describe and remember a given ear according to this system of subdivision.

“Then if a detective is sent out to look for an individual who has been recorded by us he will look less at the face than at the ear. If it tallies with a given description our man won’t care what other discrepancies there are in his face. Hair, beards, mustaches, eyebrows, identifying growths of all kinds can be pasted on or discarded. But the only thing you can do to an ear is to cut it off.”

A black silk stocking, dainty, feminine, but with no toes looked piquantly out of place in that relic room of crime.

“Mlle. X, let us call her, was pretty, chic, and had an air of condescending to visit the costly shops where she used to come,” M. Franceschi related of the stocking owner. “There was at that time an outbreak of shoplifting and we had diffi-

culty in getting on the trail of the thief or thieves. Finally, in a fashionable shop, we decided to watch a certain bit of precious lace, which we had placed rather carelessly—or so it looked—on a counter. One of our men was secreted under a counter in such a fashion that by means of a reflecting mirror he could watch that bit of lace.

“One day he saw a charming, aristocratic looking young woman handle that bit of lace rather carelessly. So carelessly that it slipped off the counter. As the sales clerk was not looking at that moment, our man expected the young woman to pick up the lace and restore it to the counter. To his surprise she apparently let it lie on the floor. A few moments later she moved dignifiedly off without buying anything.

“Our man looked to see if that lace was on the floor. It was gone. He hurried after the young woman and it took some courage on his part to detain her. She was indignant, of course, but she was taken to a private room and a store matron searched her. She found that the woman’s right shoe was larger than the left, large enough for her to slip her foot out of it easily whenever she wished. Her right stocking had no toes—there it is on this model.

“Her method was to let whatever article she wanted fall to the floor. Under cover of her long and voluminous dress her foot would slip out of its shoe, her clever toes in their toeless stocking would pick up that object and carry it to one of the many pockets she had sewed into the full length petticoats she wore. Then she would put her foot back into its shoe, move leisurely off and—*voilà!*”

What interested me as much as the relic was the picture in my mind’s eye of the dainty, somewhat haughty little lady of the Dresden china type of beauty now clad in the hideous garb of prison and moving in a world of harsh compulsion. What thoughts and feelings must be hers—for her great-great-grandmother was the famous mistress of a great French king!

The imagination catches fire in this room; for, imagination, rich, daring, and with more than a dash of poetry, is what makes French criminals stand out from those of other races. Take such a simple relic as a plain old-fashioned iron key that once belonged to a petty thief who preyed on the belongings of servant girls and other household drudges.

Yet the sneak thief who had fashioned it that he might steal from the treasure chests of slaveys saw himself and his implement in an aura of imagination. He was an intense admirer of Guignol, the puppet show that delights the world.

"With this key," he bragged when captured, "with this key I have made more women weep than Guignol has caused to laugh!"

The same quality of imagination applied to crime showed in another curio I saw in the museum, perhaps the oldest implement of crime in the world. Here is a set of horse's teeth, false, perfect. The upper and lower jaws are hinged together with iron at the jaw and a screw is so arranged that it forces the two jaws together as the screw is turned. I looked at that set of false teeth and racked my brains to guess their use. Finally I had to appeal to M. Franceschi.

"The man who devised this had quite an original idea," he told me. "He decided that there was less risk to robbery if he could get the courts of justice to help him get money by crooked means. So he devised this set of teeth. Hiding them in his overcoat pocket he would go out into the street and pick his victim. It was always some big supply firm employing horse-driven delivery trucks.

"For instance, he saw one of the trucks belonging to Félix Potin, the big wholesale grocers. He waited till the driver stopped to deliver some goods. Then he stepped into a dark hallway near by, took the false teeth out of his pocket and clamped them about his arm. Turning the screw he got the jaws together so tightly that the teeth sank into his arm.

"Then taking the teeth off he hid them and strolled out into the street again. As he came near the horse's head his elbow went up—the driver's head was turned—and hit the horse on the sensitive nose. The horse reared. The man gave a loud outcry:

"'He bit me!'

"A commotion; the man is in great pain; a crowd collects; a policeman comes running up. The man's coat is removed by sympathetic bystanders. He seems ready to faint with pain. Carefully the bystanders roll up his sleeve. On the flesh of the upper arm are bloody marks of horse's teeth, deep, obviously a nasty wound.

"The bystanders are indignant, especially as the supposed victim gives an excellent performance of a plucky man trying not to make a spectacle of himself.

"'It's a shame! A big firm like Potin's letting ugly brutes like this horse go about the city unmuzzled, biting innocent passersby! You must sue them, *monsieur*! We'll cheerfully act as witnesses for you!'

"The poor *monsieur* falteringly thanks them and says he

will act on their suggestion. Sure enough a suit for damages is filed; the witnesses testify willingly to the occurrence—and the man wins a good sum from Félix Potin with the aid of the courts and the public!”

“How was he found out?” I asked.

“Because while he had plenty of imagination in conceiving the crime his imagination failed him in another respect. He sued several times, of course. Finally when the lawyer for one of his victims heard that he had been bitten by a horse before, he brought the matter to us.

“We examined the mark of his wound; then the mouth of the latest horse to ‘bite’ him. And we found that while the marks on his arm showed a perfect set of teeth, the horse himself had an incisor missing!”

In a vertical glass case stood and hung a goodly collection of walking sticks. Outwardly they looked innocent enough. But when M. Franceschi took them out one by one and unfolded their content and stories I began to appreciate even more the richness and devilish imagination of the French criminal.

The cane that sheathes a steel sword is of course an old trick. More modern is another cane M. Franceschi showed me. Its owner, dressed in formal garb for a garden party stepped behind a bush and unseen by any one raised his cane—a stylish malacca—and pointed it at a man he hated.

For some seconds he held it thus and sighted along its gleaming length. Then one finger slightly shifted the plain gold band near the head. A small trigger dropped. There was a shot; a cry; commotion at the other end of the garden.

The man with the cane, still unobserved, lowered his “stick,” waved it gently back and forth to rid it of the curl of smoke at its tip; waited till there was no trace of either smoke or smell of powder. Then he readjusted the trigger, which went out of sight.

The plain gold band covered the trigger aperture again and the man rushed toward the other end of the garden with every appearance of great concern. His enemy was lying on the ground—dead.

The host and his servants were barring every exit from the garden. The guests were examined for weapons, among them the man with the cane. Nobody gave the cane a glance. Half an hour later, after expressing condolences to the stricken family, the man with the cane was bowed out of the house by the host, who thanked him for his expressed willingness to

do anything to help run down to earth the cowardly, mysterious—most mysterious—murderer.

It was due to the Paris police that the cane landed in its museum and its owner on the guillotine. The police, when they found no clues, began looking for motives. They made a list of those who hated the dead man. Among them was the owner of the cane.

Quietly they searched his quarters one day when he was absent. They found the cane. But unlike the servants at the garden party the detectives took a second look at the cane—a look that cost its owner his life.

Another stylish looking cane of ebony with an ivory head stands neighbor to it. With that cane went a stylish looking gentleman, dressed in London's most approved haberdashery. Debonair, looking the picture of financial respectability and every other kind of respectability, he often strolled into a bank and walked over to the receiving teller's window when no one else was near.

Invariably he would ask some question or favor that made the bank employee turn to the back of his cage. The stylish stranger's stick, which he held resting on the window ledge would dart into the cage and touch a pile of bills lying there.

Pressure near the head of the cane would send a pair of delicate steel nippers out of the tip; these would seize the edge of a bill of large denomination; the same operation would give the nippers a swift rotary movement; the bill would be wound about the nippers and disappear into the cane, just before the teller turned.

The owner was expert in this and reaped quite a harvest until one day the nippers closed on several bills at once, made too thick a cylinder to harbor in the cane and the teller saw. Now both owner and cane are in the care of the state.

Both these canes I described were conceived in a spirit almost of kindness, it seems to me, compared to several other canes M. Franceschi showed me. For after all to kill a man outright is less cruel than other things that might happen to him. M. Franceschi showed me the use of one cane, a heavy affair of ordinary aspect.

Its owner would bring it down or try to bring it down on the head of the person he wanted to assault. It would have fared better with the victim had he let that cane descend without hinder. But the victim caught the end of the stick and held on trying to pull it out of the attacker's grip.

The pull brought out a series of razor-like blades on all

sides of the cane and cut the victim's hand to ribbons. As if that were not enough, the blades were rusted and impregnated with poison; and although the victim recovered, he wished more than once in the ensuing weeks of agony with blood-poisoning that he were dead.

There are canes in that curio that stab, canes that shoot, canes that carry loot, pry open doors and windows, saw through iron bars, transport cocaine and opium and perform a score of other purposes, all criminal. But for a spectacle of man's inhumanity to man I recommend the case containing "brass knuckles" to all who are interested in such things.

Basically they are all alike—metal objects, like joined rings, which one puts on one's fingers with the object of injuring some person's face or dealing a knockout blow. But most of these "brass knuckles" have been designed with a cruelty of purpose that chills the blood.

Here is one weapon with a steel spike at the apex two inches long. Another has a heavy ridge of saw teeth. A third has a corkscrew spike. You look at these things and a hatred boils up in you for the beasts who used and designed these.

You are glad to hear the story of one of these implements, which you see broken. The man who used these "knuckles" hit his victim so hard on the jaw that the "knuckle" broke and its brass circumference buried itself in the finger of the brute who wielded it. Try as he would he could not get rid of the telltale weapon, until the police saw it on him and set him to breaking stones.

Less cruel in one way and at the same time more profoundly vicious was the man connected with the story of a piece of silk I saw in the curio room. The photograph of Lelong, the man in the case, showed a face powerful yet sly, eyes of an intensity that must have held weak characters under their spell and weak characters were the man's study and game.

He would wander through the stores along the Rue de la Paix, the street of luxuries in Paris. Under the cover of interest in the wares sold he would study the men who sold them. With a skill that was devilish he read the character of the salesmen and unerringly picked out the weak man.

Lelong then scraped acquaintance with the clerk and as he looked like a rich customer the clerk would invariably feel flattered at the chance of a profitable friendship. Lelong invited his victim—let us call him Poire—to dinner, theaters, and gradually developed in the young fellow a taste for luxuries

far beyond his means. One day he took him to the races and got him to bet heavily on a horse Lelong was sure would lose. Soon the clerk was forced to borrow of Lelong. The rich friend readily obliged.

But the time to repay would arrive only too soon and when Poire helplessly confessed his inability to meet the obligation Lelong would show a sudden and an alarming change of front.

"You either pay or I will proceed against you! You will lose your position. I will have you put in prison!"

"But how can I pay?" Poire asked in despair. "You know what I earn. Even if I went without food, clothing, or shelter—how could I pay you?"

At this point Lelong apparently softened. But a queer look glinted in those speaking eyes of his.

"I will show you a way," he said softly. "There are a dozen clerks in the store. Suppose that pair of small diamond cuff-links I saw in the show case to-day were missing. How on earth could any one tell who took them?"

"Good God, do you want me to steal?" Poire cried.

Lelong's eyes fixed the young man. "If you follow my directions there is no danger. You will then be able to pay what you owe me. With what I can get for those cuff-links you will also have enough left for several months of good times. You love good times, don't you?"

"All right, picture to yourself what good times you will have in prison—if I press my claim against you. Stone cell—hard cot—iron bars—prison food—hard labor—foul smells—good-by to freedom and gayety!

"If you are sensible you will take those links and bring them to me to dispose of and I assure you no one will be the wiser for it. If you are not sensible, I press my claims and you will go to prison anyway. Take your choice!"

The poor fellow would yield to pressure and follow Lelong's directions. With every attempt to extricate himself from Lelong's clutches the victim found himself the more surely in his power.

In time Lelong had a number of these pathetic slaves stealing for him from their employers. His fortune was being made by them when one of them finally got caught. He tried to implicate Lelong. But the villain had manipulated things so that the accusation fell flat. The Paris police, however, sensed something plausible in the charges and quietly investigated. The photograph I saw of him in the curio room was taken on his entrance to prison.

A fifty-franc note in one of the glass cases in that room has a history typical of the French swindler. Interestingly enough, however, to the Europeans America is characteristically the land of swindles, so they call the whole category of crimes of this kind, *vol à la Américaine*.

In the particular confidence game represented by that fifty-franc note one was even dressed as an American tourist, the other as a man-about-town. The two promenaded the boulevards until they spied their intended victim, a country visitor with money to spend. The two swindlers watched their intended victim for some time, following him and studying his rather obvious character.

Then the smartly dressed boulevardier approached him and flattered the country visitor's soul by asking the bumpkin where such and such a place in Paris was. Of course, the poor gull did not know.

But it warmed him to know that such a stylish-looking gentleman was a stranger like himself in the big city; that he should think he could learn from him; that he should continue so pleasantly sociable even after he found how little his acquaintance knew of Paris. They became affable, friendly; had drinks in a café at the expense of the boulevardier.

At the table next to them they noticed a man who, from his accent, they decided must be an American. He seemed to have trouble making the waiter understand him. The boulevardier leaned over and in broken English offered to assist in translating. The American proved exceedingly grateful and insisted that the two men join him in drinks. The American then invited them to dine with him.

After dinner the boulevardier invited both his "friends" to his hotel room and to the American suggested a game of cards. The American accepted. The countryman looked on, flattered at finding himself so much at home with these cosmopolitan chaps. The American lost heavily. Finally he threw his cards down.

"I simply haven't any luck with you, *monsieur!*" he cried to the boulevardier. To console himself he took what appeared to be a long and potent drink from a flash.

The boulevardier took the countryman aside and whispered:

"He's unbelievably easy to win from! You saw how poorly he played. Why don't you play him? You're sure to win."

The gull, little though he knew about cards, had told himself that the American had misplayed his hands badly. What angered the American more than the loss of the money appar-

ently was his stupidity at losing. All Americans are supposed to be rich; and certainly this one acted as if money were no great loss to him.

Finally the lout was tempted and fell. He challenged the American to play, the game began and quite naturally the American won *almost* every franc the countryman had brought for his visit. Almost, but not quite.

A fifty-franc note remained with the countryman. But the latter was becoming suspicious. There had been too marked a change in the American's playing. The victim was a husky person and into his eye came a look that spelled commotion and trouble for the others.

The boulevardier hastily took him aside again.

"Listen, I've got a suggestion. He's so drunk by now that he doesn't know a fifty-franc note from a thousand-franc bill. You've got that fifty-franc note. Slap it down on the table, pretend to be desperate.

"Call out, 'I'll play you for a thousand francs on the next card!' He won't dream of inspecting the bill. Then if you lose you don't lose so much. Whereas you stand a chance to win a lot of money back that way. For you can repeat the trick."

Again the gull was persuaded. He carried out the suggestion to the letter, slapped the fifty-franc note down, called it a thousand francs and to his great relief the other really did not seem to know the difference. Unfortunately for him the American won.

He pocketed the note. Then as if a thought struck him he took the note out of his pocket and began to examine it with drunken suspicion.

"Good God!" whispered the boulevardier to the countryman. "He suspects something! Let's run for our lives! If he finds us out it's seven years prison for both of us!"

With the nightmarish fear of punishment which a simple respectable soul feels at his first attempt to swindle, the countryman bolted out of the room, followed closely by the boulevardier. Out into the street they ran, the countryman running in one direction, the boulevardier fleeing the opposite way.

Unfortunately for the latter some of the detectives of the Paris police had recognized the pair of swindlers and had followed them and their victim. So while some pursued the boulevardier others ran after the countryman. It was a long, stern chase and when they finally caught the lout he was so frightened he dropped to his knees and begged to be let go.

The detectives finally made him realize that he was not under arrest. When this penetrated his panic he was so overjoyed that he refused to press any charge against the swindlers. But the police took the pair of swindlers to the station anyway, and the fifty-franc bill made its way to the museum where I saw it.

I looked closely at a short letter that seemed to have been written in red ink of a peculiar color. M. Franceschi saw me puzzling over it.

"That is perhaps the saddest, most cruel story of any of these," he said. "A gang of thieves got hold of an eleven-year-old boy, imaginative, suggestible, weak. After first torturing him until the lad was nearly insane with pain and fear they forced him to do their bidding. That was to climb into houses through small windows and unlock the door for them to enter and rob.

"They had the poor boy so terrified that he was less afraid of police than of his fellow robbers. Once he tried to run away but was caught and given another taste of torture. Thereafter there was nothing the boy would have dared refuse them.

"Then one day our men rounded up the gang and the boy with them. The lad was detained in the same prison for a few days until we should succeed in getting him to inform on his confederates. The rest of the gang knew what was happening. From different cells all over the prison came the howls of the gang:

"Death to the traitor!"

"They even got some of the other prisoners to take up the call, for all thieves hate a betrayer. The keepers swooped down on the noisy ones and suddenly silence fell on the prison. In his cell the young boy cowered on the floor, his hands pressed over his ears, over his eyes, trying to shut out from his very mind the horror these cries had raised up in his fancy.

"That night as the boy tried in vain to sleep he saw a sheet of paper being shoved into his cell through the door. He jumped up with a cry. Whoever it was that had brought it there disappeared mysteriously. The boy tremblingly took up the paper and read:

"This is written with blood taken from the veins of fifty prisoners here. You heard their cries to-day, cries that promised you death if you turned traitor. That was before we induced them to change their threat. Now you are doomed first to torture.

“Whoever of us fifty sees you first will capture you and hold you prisoner until enough of us are free to witness the torture we shall put you through. It is only when you are near death through torture that we will kill you. You don't know how terrible death is. You will die slowly, slowly strangled. You don't know how terrible death is!”

“This is the note you are looking at,” M. Franceschi said to me. “Their devilish design succeeded. On the already hysterical mind of the child the refrain: ‘You don't know how terrible death is!’ preyed and incubated hideous fancies.

“These, the cries apparently from the whole prison and the threat of torture, finally had their effect. When we came to set him free in the morning we found him dead. He had cut open his wrists.”

It is in this room that I looked on at recitations of the most oddly assorted studies I ever saw in anything that called itself a school. For this curio room is also the school for detectives of the Paris police. The pupils sat on benches as in all schools. The different teachers came and taught them there, though some of the courses were adjourned to the gymnasium near by.

One teacher lectured on the elements of law and what constitutes crime in the legal sense. He brought out the point that while it is not the detective's concern to *judge* any one who had done something that might be construed as a crime it is the detective's duty to judge motives that led to the act in order that all the facts in the case be revealed.

Another teacher instructed the pupils on gunshot wounds, how to tell the distance from which the shot was fired, direction, and the nature of the weapon used. A third instructor taught them to wrestle and use jujutsu: A fourth had them make charts and maps of crimes committed, and taught them how to mount delicate clues such as hairs, blood spots taken from walls, footprints in hardened mud and the like.

Still another taught them how to use magnifying glasses, from the ordinary reading glass to microscopes; how to compare the marks of a chisel used on a door in forcible entry with the edge of the chisel itself; and various other means of microscopic investigation.

If murder can be a fine art, as De Quincey held, then this curio room of the Paris police is one of the art museums of crime. But it is an art society can dispense with. So long, however, as crime persists this strangest of schools held in this room on the Quai des Orfevres will be one of the most fascinating places to visit—for those privileged as I was.

CHAPTER XIII

THE POLICE OF PARIS

THUS far in writing of the Paris Police I seem to have made the French criminal always set the dance to which the Paris police had to fiddle. Scotland Yard has a powerful organization, the Berlin police have a vast and ponderous machine and into the workings of either sooner or later the criminal finds himself drawn and held.

Whereas an organization or a machine would have as much trouble anticipating the French criminal as the couples in a country dance would in trying to keep up with an eccentric acrobat doing an original dance. That is because the French criminal is quite the maddest, most dashing, most imaginative devil of all the tribe. Sooner or later, however, he must pay the fiddler.

For the Paris police are also French, just as agile, dashing, and imaginative as the criminal and in the long run—often sooner—the police catch up with the eccentric dancer and trip him up by the heels.

It is only fair therefore to relate instances where it was the Paris police that both set the tune and did the fiddling to which the French criminal had to dance and pay the fiddler.

Let us take the odd instance of the murder of Mother Valérie, an old crone who lived in a garret in Vincennes, a residential section of Paris. I select this instance not only because it involved the oddest bit of detective ferreting I ever heard of, but also because it illustrates the particular quality in the Paris police that makes them peculiarly fit to deal with the French criminal.

Mother Valérie was a clear-cut miser type, living alone in a garret more stingily than she needed to live. She still kept a lace shop near the Etoile which brought her a decent income. But true to her type she hoarded her gains in a big trunk and grudgingly spent on her wasted body only what would keep it alive.

One morning she was found in her garret strangled; and the big trunk in which she kept her hoard was on top of her. At

first the police thought she had killed herself by causing the trunk to fall on her. But the neat way in which it was balanced on her back and the autopsy both showed she had been murdered. The police were nonplused. The only motive familiar in such cases is robbery. But every franc, every bit of treasure the old woman had hoarded up was found untouched, an inventory showed.

At that time M. Goron was chief of the *service de sûreté*, the detective branch of the Paris police. When his lieutenants came back one after another unable to report progress in running down the murderer or even guessing the motive, he decided to look into the matter himself. Starting afresh he interviewed the few people at all connected with the life of the old woman. Convincing considerations eliminated every one of these as suspects.

Then M. Goron interviewed her neighbors. Among those he talked to was a Monsieur Bavard, a sensitive, nervous free lance writer, who lived directly under Mother Valérie.

"No, I can't suggest who could have possibly killed her," he told M. Goron. "Though I must confess I have often wished some one would do it for me." He smiled shamefacedly as he said it.

"You see, I am a poor sleeper, rarely closing my eyes before one or two in the morning. Then just as I would drop off to sleep, Mother Valérie would take it into her mind to go to her trunk, drag it across her floor to the light, and, I suppose, examine her treasure trove all over again. But I have never been able to summon either the heart or the courage to go up there and murder her as I should have liked to do."

M. Goron then interviewed the other neighbors but got little more help from them. He pondered on the case all day and came home feeling defeated.

He went to bed and after tossing about fell into a troubled sleep. Then he began to dream. He dreamed that he was a free lance writer, nervous and unable to sleep and worried about the barrenness of mind that would result from lack of sleep. Then in his dream he heard some one in the room over his head dragging a heavy trunk across the floor, back and forth, scraping and bumping till he was frantic.

As the noise continued M. Goron went on to dream, he began to feel a hatred and a desire to murder the person who was robbing him of his sleep. Finally he dreamed that he leaped from his bed, rushed upstairs, found an old woman

dragging the trunk about, seized her by the throat, strangled her and piled the accursed trunk on her back.

Then he went down again at peace and dreamed that he slept so sweetly that when the police came next day to ask him about the murder he answered with composure, so that the police were disarmed by his pleasantness.

M. Goron woke next morning with a firm conviction in his mind. He went to see M. Bavard, the writer who lived under Mother Valérie's garret. Without preliminary M. Goron said:

"I don't wholly blame you for murdering the old woman. To have one's sleep broken up night after night is unendurable. But you must have gone completely out of your head actually to kill her.

"You are sane now, sane enough to realize that your best hope lies in making a clean confession and trusting to the humanity of the judges to deal lightly with a nerve-racked writer like you whose work goes bad because of lack of sleep. Take my advice, Bavard, and tell me you did it."

M. Bavard continued to smile and shook his head.

"You're dreaming, M. Goron," he said. "You've no proof of what you're accusing me."

As he said this he walked carelessly over to the dresser as if to take a match. But with a leap M. Goron got there before him and was just in time to knock out of Bavard's hand the pistol with which he was about to shoot himself.

If this were only a case of a mere dream coming true I should not include it here. But modern psychology has found that dreams are no longer the causeless unrelated phenomena we used to think them.

In the above instance what happened was "unconscious cerebration," a term with which psychologists describe that continued activity of the mind which goes on with imaginative people even after they go to sleep. Students go to bed with unsolved problems in mathematics and often wake up with the solution unexpectedly in their minds.

M. Goron had been working all day on the problem of who could have murdered Mother Valérie. His waking mind was for the time unequal to the mystery. But his mind kept on working even after he had fallen asleep and, fastening itself on the best possibility, worked out the solution in terms of a dream.

And the point of this whole illustration is that the Paris police have just the kind of effervescing minds and fertile

imagination that also characterizes the French criminal. The same agile unresting mind which in the Mother Valérie case acted unconsciously plays, of course, even more cleverly in the waking state. M. Goron illustrated this in another instance when his services were called upon by a friend who anticipated trouble. She was a charming woman, let us call her Madame Y, a society figure of irreproachable character, a loyal wife and mother.

But a touch of weakness in her, a susceptibility to sentiment and romantic settings got her into trouble which threatened not only to wreck her life, but also the career of her husband, a member of the Chamber of Deputies and a man of fiery temper. Madame Y, visiting Venice with her sister, met a handsome, personable young Cuban, who used his intelligence and good looks as a means of securing easy money.

He also used the full moon of a Venetian spring, the color and movement of carnival time, gondolas and rippling canals, and the wooing melodies of guitars in serenades. Two weeks of clever courting got Madame Y sentimentally interested in him. When she returned to Paris his clever letters brought from her several sentimental replies. It was what he had planned.

Then he came to Paris and notified her he was calling to see her. But by then she had awakened from her passing sentiment and was appalled at the prospect of having to see this man. She wrote him saying it was better for them to meet no more. He telephoned her.

"I don't think you quite understand, dear lady," he said over the wire. "I don't want to call for the purpose of making sentimental speeches. The fact is that I need a large sum of money, which I think you will be glad to pay in return for your letters. Your husband would be sure to raise a commotion if he saw these letters. And think how unpleasant such a commotion would be for you, your husband, your children, and your position in society."

So frightened was she at this blackmail that Madame Y went in distress to M. Goron, an old family friend, and begged his help. M. Goron reassured her and later sent for the young Cuban.

The young man came, debonair and very sure of himself even in the presence of the chief of the detective service of the Paris police. M. Goron studied him for some moments, taking in every detail of significance. The young man's very

confidence in himself told M. Goron something. Then he began his little psychological game.

"Those letters, *monsieur!*" he said briskly. "Let me have them."

The young Cuban smiled regretfully. "So sorry!" But he made no move.

M. Goron's eyes were searching the Cuban's face in the approved police manner; much more policeman-like than when he was really observing people. His finger pressed a button. An attendant came in.

"Bring me those portfolios from Cuba, Spain, Monaco, and Switzerland," he ordered.

Four portfolios obviously containing photographs and much information were brought in. M. Goron ran through them keenly. Suddenly his attention became keenly fixed on a photograph and a card of Bertillon measurements. He glanced at each item, then at the Cuban's face and body. For some time the Cuban bore his scrutiny pretty well. Then he became uneasy. Presently he rose.

"I am going," he said.

M. Goron darted from behind his desk, seized the young man's arm, pushed back his right cuff and dramatically pointed to a scar there.

"This scar settles all doubts, *monsieur*. You're wanted by the police!"

The young Cuban turned pale. All his composure left him.

"If I give you those letters, will you let me go?" he stammered.

"If you leave the country within twenty-four hours!" M. Goron thundered.

The young Cuban handed over a packet of letters, and with a fearful glance at the portfolios M. Goron had been consulting, hurried out of his office. It would have interested him, however, to get a closer look at those portfolios. There was not a note, not a photograph there that in the least bore on his case. Simply a trick.

M. Goron assumed from the young fellow's confident bearing that he was a practised adventurer, and decided that somewhere there must be police records of him. Then he noticed the scar when the Cuban raised his hand. It was enough.

The same imagination and use of psychology came into play in an instance I have always liked in which M. Macé, another chief of Paris detectives, played the leading part. The neighborhood of the old fortifications about Paris was infested

by gangs of Apaches, which is the Paris name for anything from a tough young workman to a professional murderer.

At the time M. Macé came into office the Apaches about the fortifications were indulging in an orgy of highway robbery with more than occasional killings. M. Macé, with characteristic energy, went after these bands in his own way.

He would dress as a clubman, drive to the fortifications, get out, and then promenade alone, apparently under the influence of good wine. With his dinner coat thrown open and his diamond studs and gold watch revealed, he was too tempting bait not to draw forth some of the hold-up men.

At the moment when some of these were removing his jewelry there would come a stern order to throw up their hands, and the hold-up men would find themselves surrounded by detectives with revolvers drawn. So often was this trap successful that Apaches swore to kill M. Macé.

He knew of the vow, and also knew that a certain young daredevil by the name of Lenoir had boasted he would be the one to carry out vengeance on the detective chief. But M. Macé decided the game he had been playing was nevertheless worth another try.

One night, therefore, before he went to the opera, he made an appointment with his squad of assistants to meet him at a certain spot near the fortifications. M. Macé enjoyed the opera, bade good-by to the friends who had accompanied him there, then took a taxi to the place where he expected to meet his men.

It was the darkest, most forbidding part of the fortifications. The chauffeur was only too glad to be paid off and hurry away. M. Macé, debonair in evening garb, looked in vain for his men. Evidently some one had blundered. But before he could walk away he saw shadowy figures gathering about him. Some one struck a match and held it near his face.

"It's the old fox himself," growled a voice. "Good!"

M. Macé's mind had to work quickly. He recognized the voice as Lenoir's, the man who had sworn to kill him.

"Yes, it *is* good we have met, my little Lenoir!" he said, all the gayety in the world sounding in his voice. "You're going to take a little stroll with me, say as far as the police station."

M. Macé told afterwards that he knew his life hung on the tone of his voice. If the slightest quaver crept into it those silent men surrounding him would sense it. Having him alone to themselves, with darkness enveloping them, that gang would

have put a swift end to M. Macé's career of terror to criminals. But his voice must have sounded as debonair as his bearing. If M. Macé, alone and in the midst of a gang sworn to get him, could be so jaunty and insolent, he could not be alone.

There were whispering and a short debate. Then Lenoir asked sullenly:

"What's the charge against me?"

"What do you mean by doubting my word?" M. Macé demanded testily. "I ask you to take a walk with me *as far* as the police station—and you at once imagine a trap. Perfect nonsense! I tell you I am entirely alone!"

There was a snarl of anger. "Yah, we know how much alone you travel in this part of the world. All right, I'll go with you. But you'll have a hard time proving anything against me!"

"Come, come! Don't waste my time making me protest my sincerity!"

There was a breathless pause. Then M. Macé barely discerned a melting away of the group. To his side stepped Lenoir. M. Macé, swinging his walking stick nonchalantly, began to chat of inconsequential things as Lenoir fell sulkily into step with him. M. Macé kept up his airy monologue until they came in front of the police station. Then he turned to Lenoir.

"Well, good night, Lenoir. Thank you for keeping me company on my lonely promenade."

Lenoir growled. "Stop this damned comedy! I've had enough of it!"

M. Macé shrugged his shoulders.

"Well, if that's the way you feel about it, you're at liberty to go to the devil *without* my thanks!"

With that he went into the station, leaving Lenoir staring, gaping, pinching himself to find out if he was awake. If he should ever read these lines, however, he will understand that incident.

This touch of good fiction in the way the minds of the Paris police run is interestingly brought out again in the case of M. Goron and the murderer Simon. When Simon was a young bank teller in Paris he had a quarrel with a notary's clerk and killed him. At the trial it was brought out that the quarrel was over the details of how they were to divide the loot they had acquired in a swindle on Simon's bank, which the two had put over.

Simon was so young that instead of the guillotine he was

sentenced to life imprisonment at the penal colony in Cayenne. Among the detectives who ran Simon down was a novice at that time, M. Goron, recently graduated from the detective school on the Quai des Orfevres, which I described in my account of the Curio Room of the Paris police.

At Cayenne, Simon became apparently resigned to his fate. But that was far from being the case with this able young schemer. When he had acquired a reputation as a resigned prisoner, and was given accounting work to do in the office of the governor of the prison colony, he began to plan his escape—and beyond that.

He induced another young fellow about his size and complexion to join in the escape. The young fellow, Perrin, was only too glad to avail himself of a plan as cleverly designed as Simon's.

The plan worked perfectly, and one dark night Simon and Perrin slipped out of the prison into the jungle surrounding it. Each had his little package of personal belongings. Waiting for them in the jungle was Gossin, a former convict who had served his sentence, but was forbidden to return to France. This man ostensibly made his living by running a small café in the city near by. Actually he made his money by helping prisoners escape from the penal colony.

He would smuggle notes into the prison and make his arrangements with any prisoner hardy enough to attempt escape. For this Gossin would be paid with the utmost the prisoner's friends and family could raise. But agents of Gossin would secretly keep track of the refugee until he returned to civil life somewhere.

If then the prisoner made any money, and, as often happened, tried to live respectably under an assumed name, one day a stranger would drop in to see him.

"You're So-and-So, escaped from the penal colony at Cayenne," the stranger would say. "Your record and Bertillon measurements are of course available."

The poor man, who had perhaps married and had a beloved family and a decent name in the community, was ready to give anything to be allowed to keep his secret hidden. It usually cost him a staggering burden in blackmail. In this way Gossin was drawing a considerable fortune from unfortunate devils he had "helped" escape.

Simon, who knew this, did not intend to help swell Gossin's coffers. Simon knew in his subtle indomitable heart that one day he would achieve prosperity; and he did not

intend that any one should profit by it but himself. It was for that reason that he invited his fellow prisoner, Perrin, to escape with him. But Perrin did not know Simon's real reason.

While the two were making their way to the spot in the jungle where Gossin was awaiting them with civilian clothes and provisions, Simon deliberately fell in such a way that his forehead grazed a stone and was gashed. When he and Perrin came up to Gossin, the later asked:

"What's that cut on your forehead, Simon? Did the guards fire at you?"

"No," Perrin told him. "The clumsy fool tripped and his forehead struck a stone."

Simon looked away and pretended to be angry at his fellow prisoner's characterization of the "accident."

Gossin gave them civilian clothes and arranged to come back that evening to conduct them to a place where they would be smuggled on board a small schooner which would take them to some safe place, whence they could make their way to Europe.

The appointment was for the night, which was moonless. When Gossin arrived at the lonely spot he saw one of the men standing motionless, with his head swathed in rough bandages. The other was prostrate on the ground motionless.

"What is the matter?" Gossin whispered. "Who is this on the ground? And what has happened?"

"It's Simon," muttered the other through the bandages that hid his face.

"He attacked me. We had a terrific fight. He smashed my face into pulp. It was a stone he kept hitting me with. But I got one, too, and gave him better than he gave, damn him! I finished him in self-defense!"

Gossin struck a match and knelt by the inert figure. The face was unrecognizably smashed. But on the forehead was the gash Gossin had seen earlier that day on Simon's forehead. In the dead man's suit, which Gossin had brought, were Simon's money, papers, and tobacco pipe. Gossin rose and peered at the other, trying to make out his expression.

"Are you sure it was in self-defense, Perrin?" he asked sharply.

"What other motive would I have?" the other muttered. "I had nothing against the fool. I was even grateful to him because he gave me the chance to escape with him. But after you left he began nagging me for calling him 'a clumsy fool'

when I told you how he got the scar on his forehead. I answered back.

"Then suddenly he stooped, and picking up a stone, leaped on me and began hitting me in the face with it. I barely escaped with my life. Then I, too, picked up a stone, gave him his own medicine—and it seemed to have finished him. I'm sorry, but I have as much right to life as Simon."

Gossin shrugged. "Well, it's your funeral, Perrin. If ever you get caught you'll have murder to answer for."

Gossin saw the bandaged man safely smuggled on board the schooner, then departed. He knew that his men would keep track of Perrin, and at the proper time be on hand to blackmail him.

But months later he received word from one of his agents.

"Perrin has slipped away from us and has simply vanished."

Gossin cursed his agents, but in time forgot his disappointment.

Meanwhile a young man arrived in a provincial town in southern France and managed to secure a bookkeeper's job with a provision merchant. He was so sober and industrious that the merchant—who was also vice-president of the local bank—was impressed with him. When the bookkeeper revealed also a knowledge of finance, the merchant got him a berth with his bank.

Here Jules Destin, as the young bank clerk was known, rose rapidly. He seemed to take to banking as a duck takes to water. He learned fast, innovated, combined, improved until he became cashier, then member of the board of directors, and finally president of the bank. In five years he acquired several other provincial banks. The chain of banks prospered.

Destin began to be heard of in Paris financial circles. He acquired a bank in Paris. It flourished. He went to live there. He became a figure in finance in the great city.

One of the qualities which won such rapid success for him was a primitive force in the man which, as a French journalist described at that time, "would have won in the jungle."

Another thing that won for him was a deadly eye for fraud, no matter how clever. "If you weren't Jules Destin," laughed one of his partners one day, "Jules Destin, pillar of society and finance, and terror to evildoers, I'd suspect you to have been a thief at some previous existence. Only a thief could be so clever at catching thieves!"

Destin gave him a cold level look. "I must say, my dear partner, you have the most charming fancies!" he said.

It was as his partner said. Destin was a terror to any forger, swindler, or stock manipulator who ever tried to perpetrate something on him. He not only spied the plot, but caught the thief and prosecuted him with a pitiless energy.

It was in such a prosecution against a pair of swindlers that Destin went one day to the office of M. Goron, who had in the meantime become chief of the detective branch of the Paris police.

Something in Destin's face and manner, something as faint as the fleeting memory of a dream, stirred in M. Goron's memory. M. Goron, like many born detectives, had a "camera eye"—an eye that never forgot completely any face it ever saw. But even photographs fade with time. M. Goron kept Destin talking while he racked his memory to account for the faint but troubling feeling that he had seen that face at some time in the criminal's dock.

He told himself his memory was playing a trick; that the successful banker, Destin, could not possibly have had such a compromising chapter in his career.

Then he felt sure memory was playing him a trick. For suddenly it cried to him:

"The face you are thinking of is that of Simon, the young bank clerk who killed the notary's son fifteen years ago! Preposterous! For Simon was sent off to the penal colony at Cayenne!"

Nevertheless M. Goron wrote to the penal colony at Cayenne, inquiring about Simon, and received the following reply:

Simon and another convict, Perrin, escaped from our prison eleven years ago with the connivance of a man by the name of Gossin, who had made a business of helping prisoners escape, but whom we eventually caught at it. Gossin is now a prisoner with us.

In the jungle Perrin and Simon had a quarrel. Perrin killed Simon and escaped. Even Gossin, who used to keep track of his clients for the purpose of blackmailing them later, lost Perrin. Although Simon's face was smashed in the fight beyond recognition, Gossin afterward testified that he recognized Simon's body by a gash on the forehead he received in falling that day; by his clothes, which Gossin had earlier in the day supplied him; and by several bits of belongings of Simon's found on the body.

This seemed to prove conclusively that M. Goron's memory had played him false in identifying Jules Destin, the financier, as Simon the murderer. M. Goron then had the choice of either admitting to himself that his "camera eye" could play him false; or he could go to a lot of apparently vain trouble

to justify his faith in his visual memory. M. Goron decided to take the trouble.

He had to work some weeks to induce government heads to consent to a rather expensive and certainly unprecedented step. Finally, however, M. Goron got what he wanted, and with something of trepidation he proceeded with his plan.

At this time he was attracting attention by his contributions to the science of Bertillon measurements of criminals. One of his friends, a woman society leader, said to him one evening:

"Your articles on the Bertillon system are fascinating!"

He bowed, and with all the appearance of hunger for more praise, said:

"You are very kind. And if you mean it, why don't you ask me to give a private lecture on the subject at your house before an audience of your friends?"

She was delighted. "Why, it's more than I would have dreamed of asking. M. Goron, what can I do to show my appreciation?"

"By asking M. Jules Destin as one of the guests. He is climbing into society, it is true, and none of us like a climber. But he has been so serviceable to the police in helping us run down swindlers that I would like to show him a little appreciation."

M. Jules Destin was asked to the lecture and eagerly accepted.

The lecture was held in the handsome living room of the society leader. Hidden in the next room, where he could see every one of M. Goron's auditors was a hard-looking individual burned by the tropics and scarred by a life of prison and crime. It was Gossin, the professional "friend" of those who wished to escape the penal colony at Cayenne. Gossin had been sent to France under heavy guard just for this occasion.

M. Goron explained to his fashionable audience the workings of the Bertillon system of measuring criminals for identification. A servant in livery apologetically handed him a telegram in the midst of his lecture.

"I was instructed to give it to *monsieur* at once, as it is very urgent," the servant apologized. M. Goron nodded and read the message. It was from one of his subordinates in the room hidden with Gossin.

"Gossin remembers Simon's face well," the message read. "He absolutely identifies Destin as Simon. We are convinced of Gossin's sincerity, because as soon as we pointed out Destin,

he turned white and exclaimed, 'My God, then it was not Perrin who escaped. It was Simon who murdered Perrin and fooled me and the others into thinking that it was Simon who was dead!'

M. Goron went on with the lecture. But his mind was furiously planning. He dared not arrest a man like Jules Destin on what might prove only a remarkable resemblance.

"And now, dear ladies and gentlemen, I will illustrate how we actually take Bertillon measurements by doing it with one of this honored audience. Let me see, who shall it be? M. Jules Destin, let us say, because he has been such an aid to bringing criminals to justice. M. Jules Destin!" he said invitingly.

Destin turned visibly pale and hesitated. Then quickly controlling himself, he rose.

"Any thing to oblige my able friend M. Goron!" he said, and submitted himself to being measured like any other criminal.

When the record was completely made out by M. Goron, an aide brought in another card. It was the original record of Bertillon measurements of Simon the convicted murderer. One glance told M. Goron that he had won.

"This card tells me that some one wants to see M. Destin outside," M. Goron answered, looking up.

Unsuspecting, but glad to get out of that audience, Jules Destin walked into the next room. He was confronted by Gossin and three detectives. For some moments Destin stared angrily at the three men silently regarding him. Then angrily he turned to leave.

But Gossin was his evil genius after all. And Jules Destin's rise in the world came to the terrible climax of the guillotine for the murder of Perrin, his fellow prisoner.

CHAPTER XIV

THE BONNOT BAND

SOME day there will be written the ballad of the Bonnot Band. But it will take a poet to do it who loves ferocity, and dash, and the courage that flips up life like a coin for a gamble. He will sing not of the Arab steeds of the highwaymen of other days, but of powerful automobiles flashing through Paris streets at midday; of a few men with carbines holding a city at their mercy; of banks looted while crowds held their breath; of man hunts with packs of human bloodhounds straining for their prey, and not too anxious to get them alive; of death struggles in the dark with only the blazing of revolvers to give light; of the running to earth of bandit chiefs, and battles continued through the day and night of two against an army, while powerful searchlights slashed the dark, and a multitude roared and surged in a vast ring; and of deaths so valiant that they almost atoned for unforgivable lives. Some one will write that ballad. It will have to have the swift and sweeping flight of an airplane, and something of its tempo; certainly it will have to be as modern in spirit. But meanwhile I must tell the story.

Old M. Xavier Guichard, inspector general of the Paris police, was chief of the detective service when he hunted Bonnot and his band. If Bonnot helped to turn his hair gray, Guichard is still a vigorous old man. His black eyes snap; his beard is forked; and his voice and speech are still crisp and commanding. As he spoke of the Bonnot hunt, fire kindled in his eyes. Unlike many Frenchmen he does not gesture. But as he relived the old fight he slued his body sidewise to his desk, planted his right elbow on it, and his long, capable fingers spoke with him. Most eloquent they were. They were supple and stealthy when he spoke of the stalking of prey; they snapped like pistol shots; they tensed to bone in struggle scenes; and they relaxed speakingly when the last bullet was fired. With his racial gift for eloquence he made the story as vivid as though he were an actor; and in the vital sense of the word he was, for his hand put the last bullet into Bonnot.

Yet at no time did he depart by as much as a comma from the official data on the *dossier* before him.

"The morning of December the twenty-first, nineteen hundred and eleven, was a rainy one," he began. "In the Rue Ordenner, a branch of the big banking organization, the Société Generale, was about to open for the day's business. They were waiting for Ernest Caby to arrive with funds and bonds from the main office as was his custom daily. He would come by way of the tram to the corner, where he would be met by Ernest Peemans, a guard. Both Caby and Peemans were heavily armed, and both were big, courageous men. That morning they met at the tram as usual, and started for the bank. Neither they nor any one else paid any attention to a closed automobile that was standing a few houses away from the bank, with its engine whirring. On the seat of the car was a man in a long rubber overcoat, his cap pulled well over his eyes, which were also hidden by big automobile goggles. Caby and Peemans passed the car, chatting, Caby carrying the bag with three hundred and twenty-five thousand five hundred francs in his left hand, his right hand resting in his pocket in touch with his revolver.

"They were almost in front of their bank when from the closed automobile stepped two men with drawn revolvers. One of them pumped bullets into Caby, who sank to the sidewalk. The other pointing his gun at Peemans' head sent him reeling with a powerful blow. From every door and window in the street popped the heads of startled men and women. The man who had shot down Caby was trying to tear the leather bag from his hands. But the bank messenger, though seriously wounded, clung tenaciously to it, at the same time trying to reach for his own revolver. Another bullet made him let go. He fell back, and the robber jumped into the closed automobile with the bag. At the same time his companion joined him. The machine leaped forward and away. From the sidewalks a score of men ran toward the car to stop it. Then from each door of the car appeared an arm blazing away at the crowd. Around the corner of Rue Ordenner roared the machine.

"The neighborhood was aroused. When the car appeared people tried to stop it, but changed their minds and scattered to escape the bullets of the bandits. In the middle of the street was a lumbering truck. The driver glanced behind, saw the car racing toward him, heard the firing, and decided to block the escape. Steering, he took the exact middle of the

street. For an instant the man at the wheel of the auto seemed to hesitate—to the left or to the right? There was not enough room in the street on either side. He swerved to the left, ran up on the sidewalk, back into the street again, and then as they passed, the bandits turned and sent their compliments to the driver of that truck with a shower of bullets. Lucky for him he dropped into his truck in time. At the next corner the car skidded completely about as it turned, and then shot out of sight.

“Nickel-plated bullets of an exceptionally large caliber were found in Caby, who survived his wounds. That was the only clew we got. The next day the car was abandoned near the docks at Dieppe where the channel steamers leave for England. The car had been stolen there a few days before. We had nothing by which to identify the bandits. They had left no finger prints in the car; only the rubber overcoat worn by the chauffeur. So we surmised that the gang had come from over the channel, and had escaped the same way.

“In ten days, however, I found out how wrong I was. I knew that the gang were French anarchists who lived in the Montmartre section of Paris. The man at the wheel was Bonnot. Dieudonne had done the shooting and the actual robbing. ‘Dieudonne,’ ‘God-given,’ what irony had selected that name! Callemin was the third man.”

“Exactly how did you learn that?” I asked.

“I mustn’t tell you exactly who told me,” M. Guichard said. “I don’t want to expose to vengeance the men who did it. Besides they did not betray the identity of these men voluntarily. There soon came to me reports that young anarchists were boasting that the audacious bank robbery was the work of fellow anarchists. I put my men on the trail of every man and woman in Paris suspected of being of their creed. But I can tell you this. It is the experience of police all over the world that in every large anarchist group a traitor soon appears. At any rate ten days after the exploit I had the names of the bandits and was hot on their trail.

“But M. Bonnot and Company were faster than we. They did not leave Paris and its suburbs. But they moved from place to place so fast that we were always five or six days behind them. Eleven times they escaped us. On January the fourth, a few days after we learned of the Bonnot Band, they gave us something else to know them by. An old and rich couple at Thiais were brutally murdered in their home, and

robbed of twenty thousand francs. M. Bertillon of our service, whose identification system is now used by the police of all countries, discovered finger prints that led us later to Carouy, one of Bonnot's lieutenants.

"On February the twenty-seventh, one of our most vigilant policemen, who, like the rest of the force, was on the lookout for the Bonnot crew, saw a luxurious automobile going in the direction of the Gare St. Lazare, and decided he wanted to question the occupants. He ordered it to stop. When it showed no signs of slowing up he jumped onto its running board. Bonnot, who was at the wheel, struck the gendarme on the jaw, but failed to knock him off. Whereupon a hand holding a revolver appeared from inside the machine and shot the gendarme dead. The body dropped into the street, and the machine whirled away. Again the nickel-plated bullets of large caliber, and again an automobile abandoned, this time almost entirely burned up. It was Callemin who had murdered the gendarme.

"Less than a month later our friends again made their appearance in public. On March the twenty-fifth at about eight in the morning along the broad highway to Lyon, made famous by story and play, came a new De Dion-Bouton car driven by Mathillet, chauffeur to Colonel Comte de Rouget, who was inside. By the side of the chauffeur sat another man employed by the De Dion-Bouton Company to teach Mathillet the use of the car. The machine arrived in front of a signalman's hut by the side of the railroad. From the hut stepped three men, one of them waving a handkerchief for the car to stop. They had carbines in their hands.

"'It is your car we want!' one of them cried to Mathillet. 'Get off!'

"Mathillet hesitated, and received a bullet in his heart. The company chauffeur with four bullets in him dropped to the road feigning death. Colonel Comte De Rouget jumped out of the car, thought of offering fight, got a bullet in his hand, and ran off discouraged. The bandits threw Mathillet's body into the road and raced off in the car.

"Two hours later the automobile stopped in front of another branch of the Société Generale, this time in Chantilly. To get there they must have run through the heart of Paris in their car, or made a swift detour along the principal roads. A woman was waiting for them. She gave a quick report of who was on duty in the bank. Four men now stepped out of the car, and two others joined them. The four walked into

the bank with carbines in their hands. The other two remained outside with the car, holding carbines, also.

"In the bank were Timquier, the cashier, Legendre, assistant cashier, and two other employees. Each bandit selected his man, walked up to him and shot. Timquier dropped dead with a bullet in his heart. Legendre died soon after. A third man was slightly wounded. A fourth leaped out of the room with bullets whistling about his ears. Forty-nine thousand francs in gold and paper were packed into the automobile by the bandits. The new engine failed to start immediately. While Bonnot worked on it the people of the neighborhood, alarmed by the shooting, flocked into the square. As though they were enjoying themselves in a shooting gallery the bandits deliberately sprayed bullets about the crowd, good-humoredly keeping them off without killing any one. When the engine started the gang whirled off.

"By this time the police had arrived. Some on motor cycles, others in automobiles started in pursuit. Then from the little back window of the murder car and from its doors carbines began to speak. Their range was longer than the revolvers of the police. The automobile succeeded in reaching the railroad yard, though the bandits took their lives in their hands racing at the speed they did. The police had flattened their tires with their bullets. With that mathematical exactness with which they planned everything the gang got to the station just as an express train was going by. Abandoning their car the bandits swung on to the train. But when we telegraphed ahead we found that they had dropped off at a point where a sharp curve slowed up the train.

"This affair, coupled with the others, wrought the public up to a frenzy of fury and terror. In turn the journals turned on me and my men. They vented on us all the indignation that they felt toward the bandits. We were slow and incompetent, they raged. As a matter of fact we did quicker work on this matter than most people knew. But public feeling was so strong that we seemed to them slow.

"We organized a special motor police to hunt the band. I put one hundred and twenty detectives on the case and took personal charge. By this time we knew all about Messrs. Bonnot and Company, except where they were. One of the interesting clues that led me to Bonnot's past was what you might call his handwriting with an oxyhydrogen flame. It is not generally known, but every burglar who burns open a safe with the oxyhydrogen flame shows a characteristic wavering

line which the flame takes in its circuit on the metal, a line almost as distinctive as handwriting. We found that in his more quiet past M. Bonnot specialized on burning through steel doors; and the wavering line was alike in several cases.

"We were following their trail with every nerve and resource strained to the utmost. After the second bank robbery we commandeered thirty-two automobiles in the city and visited every anarchist who might know anything about the hiding place of our quarry. It was in this way that two of my inspectors, big, brave men, Jouin and Colmar, heard that Gauzy, a receiver of stolen goods, living at Ivry, might know where Bonnot himself would be. With four others they raced out there and walked in on Gauzy before he could lock the door.

"Dusk had fallen. Jouin without any ceremony, shoved a revolver into Gauzy's view and demanded to be told where Bonnot was. Gauzy looked at the six men, then said, 'I have his address upstairs.' Leaving the four subordinates on guard downstairs, Jouin and Colmar followed Gauzy, their weapons in their hands. Pointing to a closed door Gauzy said, 'It is locked, I remember, and I'll have to go and get the key.' But Colmar was suspicious, and walked to the supposedly locked door and tried it. It opened. He stepped into a completely darkened room closely followed by Jouin. Both men had their revolvers ready. There was a flash and a report as some one shot at them. It was Bonnot. Colmar made a headlong dive for the spot from which the shot came and caught some one. Together they crashed to the floor with Colmar on top. At the same time Bonnot pressed his revolver against Colmar's left side and shot. Jouin not daring to shoot leaped forward to where he heard the two men struggling, felt for Bonnot, and got two powerful hands about his throat. But again Bonnot used his revolver, and Jouin fell back with a bullet in his head.

"The detectives downstairs hearing the fight dispatched one of their men to go upstairs. The others were watching Gauzy and two other men who had arrived meanwhile to call on Gauzy. This detective ran to the room and heard only Colmar groaning, 'I am done for!' He lit a match. There on the floor were two apparently dead men, Jouin and Bonnot. Bonnot lay in a crimson pool. But it was only from a wound in his hand, and he was playing dead. The detective ran downstairs to telephone for a doctor for Colmar. The instant

he left the room Bonnot jumped to his feet, ran out of the room, opened a window in the hall, jumped to a roof, and escaped.

"Matters were rapidly approaching a crisis. We were catching up to the gang. My men were frantic to get the bandits, for these gentry had killed several of our people and it was no longer merely professional duty or the reward that was driving them on to the hunt. The populace of Paris and surrounding towns were frenzied with fear and hate of the bandits. I must concede that the bandits were playing an audacious game. They might have escaped to some remote part of France, or perhaps out of the country if they so desired, for they were clever enough. But no! They had thrown down the gauge of battle to the police of Paris, and in Paris they remained. But they stayed only a few days in each retreat, and in each case it was some isolated house in the suburbs. We had already arrested seven of the gang. Scores of other anarchists were also under arrest or under surveillance. On their side they had killed four civilians and two police officers, and wounded several others.

"Three days after Bonnot escaped us a bookbinder by the name of Grainghaud, whom Bonnot falsely suspected of having betrayed him, was waylaid by Bonnot and shot down. Bonnot left him for dead. But Grainghaud was only seriously wounded, and recovered.

"Then on the twenty-eighth we ran Bonnot down to his hiding place. Our detectives sent me word that he was in the garage of his anarchist friend and accomplice, Dubois, who had taught Bonnot how to drive the automobile like a fiend. When we got word at police headquarters that Bonnot had been tracked, I took ten inspectors and M. Lepine, the Chief of police, and together we rushed to Choisy-Le-Roe, about eight miles south of Paris. We saw a small building of pressed stone and lath, the typical flimsily made garage of the small town. There was an outside stairway leading to the quarters above the garage.

"As we approached the garage we saw Bonnot mounting a bicycle unaware of our coming. Several of us pointed our revolvers and shouted for him to throw up his hands. He turned like a wild cat, and whipping out his own revolver bounded up the steps firing as he went. Inspector Augene fell with two bullets in his abdomen, Inspector Arlon got a bullet in his arm. We rushed forward. But a withering fire met us. We knew that the men inside had a magazine full

of ammunition and would use the last cartridge sooner than surrender.

"We drew back to consider. Anxious as we were to get these men without delay I did not feel justified in sacrificing my men more than it was absolutely necessary. The two bandits inside had the protection of the walls, we were exposed to their view and fire. Every now and then Bonnot would step out on the balcony of the outside stairs, take aim and fire. Then he would jump in again. The little garage occupied an isolated position on the village green, and it was impossible to sneak up to the building.

"Meanwhile the inhabitants of the town were appearing in numbers, some of them carrying pitchforks, others sporting rifles, all anxious to help. Needless to say they were more in the way than helpful. We requisitioned a lot of mattresses, and with these as shields we tried to creep up to the door of the garage. But a hot and well-directed fire from the bandits drove our men off. Mattresses are not bullet proof. Then I telephoned to a neighboring barracks for a company of the Republican Guard. We simply had to have weapons to out-range those of the bandits. The Guard arrived at ten in the morning. We requisitioned a wagon loaded with hay. A young lieutenant of the sappers with a dynamite cartridge and a long Bickford fuse got under the wagon and gave the word. The wagon with the horse in its shafts backed toward the garage until it was against the front wall. From above a perfect cataract of bullets poured into the wagon. Placing the cartridge the lieutenant lit the fuse, and under the shelter of the wagon got back to our lines. There was a flash, a roar, and a hole was blown in the wall.

"But it did not bring us much nearer to the bandits. We still did not dare to rush the house. At noon the bugle of the Republican Guard blew 'Cease firing' and——" Here the French sense of humor manifested itself in the smile of M. Guichard. "Both sides declared an armistice for lunch.

"At one o'clock we returned to the siege with another attempt to blow up the garage. The engineer again used the hay wagon as a shield, and took in addition to the dynamite several cans of gasoline. When he returned to us and the cartridge exploded it was seen that the garage was on fire. Then M. Lepine, several inspectors, my brother, and myself, got under the wagon and had it backed once more to the building. Through the hole blown in the wall at the first explosion we rushed. On the ground floor we found Dubois lying dead

with three bullets in him. I ran up the outside steps into the room from where Bonnot and Dubois had done the firing. Among the wreckage of plaster and furniture I saw a pile of mattresses. There was no one in the room.

"Then I saw the mattresses move slightly, and a hand stole out from between them with a revolver. The hand fired. I fired at the same moment at the spot where I judged Bonnot's head must be. There was barely a second between our two shots. I seized the hand and pulled out Bonnot. He was semiconscious. The wound in the wrist which he had received at Ivry-sur-Seine from Colmar was tied with a dirty bandage. There were twelve other bullet wounds in his body and three in his head.

"We rushed him out of the burning garage into an ambulance. Then the crowd closed in on us. They wanted Bonnot. They were more like a pack of wolves than men. They raged for his body. It was with great difficulty that we drove them back.

"Twenty minutes after we got Bonnot to the hospital he expired. In his clothes was found a bit of paper scribbled with what was meant to be a last testament. The first part of it was evidently written during the height of the siege; the last part, in a wavering hand, after he had been hit several times. It read:

"I must live my life. Every man has a right to live. And since your idiotic and criminal social organization thinks it can forbid me to live, so much the worse for it! I die!

JULES BONNOT.

"Among his effects in the garage we discovered a note whereby we found twenty-two thousand francs which he had buried in a cemetery. He left a letter for me in which he tried to exonerate his lieutenants, Gauzy, Carouy, and Valet. But we knew better. We found also a lot of forged military and civil passports, and a work on mineral substances.

"Some idea of the desperate character of the band we got from a letter which Bonnot wrote to a comrade telling what had become of one of their men. It appears that the missing man had been riding in an automobile with Bonnot and his right-hand man, Garnier. The missing man's revolver went off accidentally and shot him in the hand. Bonnot and his lieutenants exchanged looks which the other member of the gang missed. But those looks said, 'When he goes to get this wound dressed there will be awkward questions. We

can't afford the risk.' So they took out their revolvers, riddled him with bullets, and threw the body into the road.

"Garnier and Valet, the two remaining lieutenants of the band, were still at large. But a small army of our men were on their trail like bloodhounds. Furthermore the whole country was aroused and was hunting for them. For two weeks we hunted down every clew. Then from Nogent-sur-Marne, near Paris, we got word that two individuals looking like Garnier and Valet had taken a cottage with two men at this fishing resort on the river. I sent a few of my men to lurk about and see whether it was really they. They reported, 'Yes.'

"With characteristic boldness Garnier and Valet had rented this cottage ostensibly for a fishing holiday. With them were Marie Schoofs and a woman called Dondon. The cottage was situated almost immediately under a high viaduct. But it was itself on a rise, and commanded a view of the immediate surroundings. When my men telephoned me confirmation of the suspicions of the neighbors they also told me that Garnier and Valet had made their cottage a veritable fortress. I told the men to try to seize the bandits while they were out of the house. But my men replied that evidently the bandits had become suspicious, for they were not inclined to leave the house.

"I decided not to wait any longer. It would have to be another siege. I had a quick consultation. Then I called for fourteen automobiles, filled them with my men, and armed with revolvers and carbines we raced through Paris at sixty miles an hour for Nogent-sur-Marne. Word passed quickly through the city that we had run down the bandits. Even before we got to Nogent the city was full of machines loaded with men and following us. Everywhere we passed we heard shouts of 'They've found them! They've found them!' Almost as soon as we arrived appeared automobiles full of reporters and newspaper photographers.

"Profiting by my experience in the Bonnot siege I telephoned to Fort Nogent for a company of zouaves with machine guns, sappers, and the powerful searchlights of the Nogent fire department. I knew that this time the siege would last into the night. In the automobiles with us we had a lot of iron plates about four feet by three, with loop-holes for revolver muzzles. These were to be used instead of the mattresses which we had found so ineffective in the Bonnot siege. They could be carried by a man in front of him

with one hand, while the other hand was active with the revolver.

“Back of the cottage where Garnier and Valet were fortified was a small garden. Wearing the sash of my office and ten inspectors at my back, all of us with our revolvers in hand, I entered the garden and called to those in the cottage to surrender in the name of the law. After a silence the door opened, and Marie Schoofs came out tremblingly. Behind her the door closed quickly to the rattle of chains and bolts. We took the Schoofs woman to a neighboring house, and at every shot from us she cried out in terror that Garnier was killed.

“A shower of shots from the house was their answer. We opened the battle then. Fifty of my inspectors surrounded the house. We were reënforced by the Nogent police and later the company of zouaves joined us. They had brought light artillery with them. But owing to the intervening houses we found that this could not be used without first destroying other buildings. With the iron shields in front of us we deployed and advanced in a ring firing into the windows and doors. But the doors were too strong to fall before mere revolver and rifle fire. The men inside had such an advantage from their oblique view of us through the windows that Inspector Fleury fell with two bullets in him, and Cayrouse got a bullet in his side.

“Meanwhile in a vast ring about the house the populace of Paris and surrounding country were gathering at a respectful distance. The roadways were choked with automobiles. The sound of that vast crowd was like the roaring of a stormy sea on a rocky coast. There was rage in that sound. The Bonnot Band, hunting like man-eating tigers, had aroused the elemental animal in the world they terrorized. Now that the band was run to earth the crowd meant to be in at the death.

“Night was falling. There was no moon to light the scene. So I ordered the big searchlights ready. The mob was pressing in so close to the battle that my men had to turn and fire over the heads of the people to force them back. Then I sent a young sapper to the aqueduct with a dynamite cartridge. This he dropped in front of the street door to the cottage. With a deafening report a big hole was blown in the entrance. But when we tried to rush it we found that we had only furnished a firing hole for Garnier and Valet.

“It was black night now. Suddenly from their towers came

the blazing shafts of the searchlights trained on the house. One of the zouaves had crawled under shelter of the dark into the garden and was lying in the grass waiting for a head to appear at the windows. When the searchlights illumined them he saw both Garnier and Valet standing in the windows. He shot. The frame of the window splintered. From Garnier and Valet came peals of derisive laughter, and a mocking gesture from Garnier. Then they dropped out of sight, and jets of fire poured into the garden where the zouave's rifle had flashed.

"With the zouaves we executed a turning movement and gained the shelter of the houses next to the cottage. At quarter past ten a young zouave glided through the grass of the garden on his stomach and placed a mellenite cartridge in front of the door through which Marie Schoofs had emerged. When it exploded the door was blown in and took fire. That was all we had gained by this second explosion.

"Besides the searchlights there were numberless torches in the great crowd which surrounded us a mile away, and acetylene flames flared on the aqueduct above. The zouaves managed to mount some machine guns with which they sprayed the loop holes that the bandits used to fire through. But as the night advanced several more of our men fell wounded by the bandits.

"The siege had now been raging nine hours. It was four in the morning. Light would soon come to help the bandits pick off our men. I felt that it was time we made a rush for them at any cost. So we arranged it much as raiding parties have done during the war. There was a high and narrow wall that led to one of the upper stories of the cottage-fortress. We switched off the searchlights and left the wall in complete darkness. Then one of our men crept forward with a bomb of dynamite tied to several cans of acetylene. Lighting the fuse he crawled back. But not before the bandits fired at him out of the small window that overlooked the wall.

"This time there was a terrific explosion and the side of the upper story opened in a jagged hole, lit up by the blaze of the burning acetylene. We saw the bandits stagger out of the room, firing through the opening as they ran. We let the blaze have its way with the upper part of the house to be sure that it drove them downstairs. Then a detachment of firemen crawled along the wall with a hose and partly extinguished the flames. Close on their heels came a score of us with our revolvers. We swarmed into the room and down

the stairs. We could hear our men pouring a steady fire of machine guns and small arms through the holes torn in the house on the ground floor by the former explosions. We had to pass these holes and be exposed to the fire of our own men. But at a signal of shots grouped in a certain way, our men outside knew that it was we who were descending, and they stopped.

"The house was dark except for a sullen glow from the still burning embers, and where the searchlights cut through the torn walls. We crept down as far as the ground floor firing a barrage as we went, although the bandits were for the time being withholding their fire. In what nook they had hidden we did not know. But momentarily we could expect to hear from them.

"We got down to the cellar and smashed in the door. Then through that door poured their last salvo. Each had two guns and the four guns were going at the same time. We fired at the flashes until we saw them no more. In the dark we rushed them. This time there was no response.

"Some one quickly struck a light and threw it. Then we saw Garnier and Valet—dead. Torches were brought. The two bandits were almost literally hashed with bullets.

"In a corner we heard a whimper. It was the Dondon woman cowering and nearly insane. Yet she had not availed herself of the opportunity to leave in safety when Marie Schoofs did.

"Garnier and Valet, too, left their testament:

"Man reasons more and more with the ages. But this evolution is slow, unbearably slow. It is retarded by ignorance. The ignorant man is either authoritarian, tyrannical, or he suffers tyranny——"

"It is a strange thing," M. Guichard remarked to me with a little smile of irony, "that anarchists of the Bonnot Band type in their philosophy rant at authority. Yet there isn't a more absolute authority exercised anywhere than that which they themselves organize in their bands. Power of life and death they wield over their own comrades without an instant's hesitation and without a shadow of trial. However——"

A note of admiration crept back into his tone. "Both Bonnot and Dubois, and again Garnier and Valet, in their dying moments tried to do the generous thing toward their comrades. The last two left also a letter to me attempting to exonerate their surviving comrades. They also left a sheaf of clippings with photographs of some of our people who helped hunt down

Bonnot. Every one of the faces on these photographs was slashed again and again.

"The last chapter?" M. Guichard said. "The guillotine wrote it for Carouy, the killer of the old couple; Dieudonne, the man who shot down Caby, the bank messenger and others; Gauzy, the 'fence,' in whose house Bonnot killed Inspector Jouin and wounded Colmar; Soudy, who held up the crowd with a carbine during one of the bank robberies; Metge, who helped Carouy kill the old couple. Others got life sentences. Lacombe killed himself at the moment of arrest.

"Carruiy, another of the gang, was captured before he could do the same. He stayed up all night with a revolver in hand waiting to kill himself the moment we showed ourselves. Knowing how desperate he was to escape prison we kept him in his cell absolutely naked. One day he did break out of his cell into a courtyard, climbed like a monkey to a high roof on the prison, and standing on the edge shouted down that when the bells struck noon he would throw himself down to death. The governor of the prison pleaded with him not to do it. Carruiy was deaf to his entreaties. Finally we sent up a fireman on a ladder to get him down. Then it was Carruiy's turn to plead with the governor not to do it before noon. He wanted to keep his word he said. But the fireman came toward him, and Carruiy hurled himself down to the street five stories below." As he finished M. Guichard's eyes were reflective. It was no longer the fighter's look, but that of the man looking out over a vista of life and time.

"I wonder," he said slowly, "what would have been their fate had they lived to wear horizon blue in the late war?"

CHAPTER XV

A MAN-HUNTING MACHINE

IF I were an habitual criminal, no matter how clever at deceiving detectives, I might some time dream the following nightmare: I would dream I am being hunted not by human beings, but by a machine. This machine uses mechanical men, whose very cut of beard and hair of the head, whose walk and talk is prescribed for by military regulations; out of whom every bit of individuality has been drilled; who move not singly, but as military squads; who individually do not know what they are doing, but who fit like cogs in a machine as delicate as clockwork, but with the force of a stone crusher.

Part of the machine would be a human net into whose meshes, at the click of a ticker, are swept, without warning, hundreds of people at a time, sometimes thousands, innocent and guilty alike, for examination microscopically minute.

The main part of the machine is a catalogue. On millions upon millions of cards of that catalogue is recorded a detailed history of every man, woman, and child in the country, mine included, from the moment of birth to within half an hour of my nightmare.

The cards not only require a large number of cabinets to hold them—so many are there—but whole rooms, whole houses, a whole block of houses filled with nothing but catalogue cards, through which I am being hunted by peering spectacled men, hunted until the least fact about me is found.

Then when my hiding place itself is thus dug out a ticker sounds in the police station nearest where I hide. A mechanical police official barks out a military command; a squad of mechanical men leap into an automobile patrol. It rolls straight to my hiding place and before I can escape, the mechanical men have me seized and helpless in steel.

If all this sounds like a mere nightmare it must surely feel like one to a German criminal. For it is literally a picture of the machine that hunts criminals in Berlin.

Let us study this machine at work on a case.

Rudolph Stenghal was treasurer of a fashionable church

in Berlin. At a special evening service one Sunday night a considerable collection was taken up for the purpose of building an additional chapel. Stenghal, carrying a satchel containing this collection, which amounted to several thousand dollars, was accompanied to his home by a few of his friends and the "undersexton," a strong youth by the name of Philip.

At the door to his bachelor apartment home Stenghal's friends and Philip, having seen him and the funds safe, as they thought, bid him good night and went to their several homes.

Stenghal lived alone with only an old family man-servant, Otto, who slept at the other end of his roomy bachelor apartment. When Otto went to wake his master next morning, his knock at the bedroom door was not answered. The servant tried the door and found it locked.

Such a thing had never happened before to his knowledge and anything out of ordinary in his master's life was alarming. After debating with himself Otto forced the door open and saw Stenghal on his bed in a welter of bloody bedclothes, his throat cut. The small, old-fashioned safe in which Stenghal kept his valuables was out in the middle of the floor, its steel door blown off, its contents gone.

Otto ran to the telephone, blundered some time in getting the police, and finally managed to make himself understood. Within five minutes of the time he got a few words across the telephone a squad of Berlin detectives under a detective sergeant leaped into an automobile patrol and was rolling to the home of Rudolph Stenghal. These are the "mechanical men" I spoke of in the nightmare of the habitual criminal.

Let us study them as they sit stolidly in the patrol wagon, looking alike and if at all thinking, thinking alike. We will study them not from their persons, but from their common past.

Each of these men, according to the requirements for admission to the detective service, has served at least nine years in the German army. Nine years as a soldier in the German army would iron out the deepest wrinkle of individuality in any man; and these men have been rendered as uniform as the products of a stamping machine.

Then for five or six years each has served again in uniform as a Berlin policeman, patrolling streets, regulating traffic, handling crowds according to minutely detailed police regulations. By the time he becomes a detective by virtue of his thorough fitting into the cog of the Berlin police machine every

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one of these men has long passed his plastic age, is thirty-seven years or more old, and is as mechanical a man as it is humanely possible to be.

Everything is prescribed for him by regulations, his walk, his talk, his beard, and his gestures. Let me quote a few of the paragraphs of the printed manual which is the bible of his detective life:

"Members of the police force are under military discipline, and must mold their conduct while on duty in accordance with military forms. The feeling of military subordination must always be expressed in the bearing of the individual toward his superior.

"When a subordinate is in the company of a superior he is to walk on the left side. If the superior is in the company of several subordinates, the subordinate who is older in service must be on the left, the other on the right side of the superior.

"The speech of the police, when addressed to a superior, must be short, definite and clear and should not be accompanied by explanatory gestures or motions of hand or body or either. *The hair of the head and the beard are to be trimmed in accordance with military instructions.*" (Italics mine.)

So that a crook who has managed to secure a copy of the police regulations could not only recognize a group of Berlin detectives by means of them, but could tell by their relative positions as they walk with their superior which has served longer on the force! Nothing in such a state of affairs to give the criminal in Berlin nightmares, one would say. But that would be like judging the effectiveness of a machine by looking at its simplest cogs. Let us look deeper into the machine.

The mechanical men arrived at the home of Stenghal, did the things detectives of other cities do under the circumstances, looked for finger-prints, and other clues, and made a careful study of how the criminals had forced their way into the house, killed Stenghal, and blew open the safe. Then the sergeant of the squad stepped to the telephone and reported to headquarters the outstanding findings in a sort of code.

Mode of entry was described as "No. 17 AE." Mode of killing as "No. 23a razor." Mode of blowing the safe open as "No. 14bis, nitro-glycerine." And so on.

There did not seem to be a detail of the crime that was not already catalogued at detective headquarters and known by

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number and symbol to sergeants of squads of mechanical men.

Even as these details were coming in an operator at a switchboard in the huge headquarters building on *Alexanderplatz*—its granite front bearing the marks of machine gun fire and bombs in Communist uprisings since the war—clicked out in Morse code a terse command to all police stations at once.

It set whirring the wheels of the *Razzia*, that part of the main machine which is coördinate with the card catalogue I spoke of in the nightmare. The *Razzia* is something Anglo-Saxon countries know little of and would tolerate still less were it practiced there.

From every police station automobile patrol wagons started, manned by mechanical men in uniform and in plain clothes. It was a holiday, and the dancing resorts, the drinking places, the cafés, and restaurants were crowded. Upon scores of these descended these motor patrols.

At one moment the gayety of music and the dance, of clinking glasses and the clatter of dishes of holiday eating. The next a stern order above the din, the sudden appearance of policemen and detectives at doors and windows and the hush of waiting.

But there is little or no panic; for German crowds are used to the *Razzia*, or wholesale searches without warrant. And the honest German citizen not only does not resent it, but is actually proud of this proof of the activity of *his* police in running down criminals.

Let us look on at the *Razzia* on that particular day as it worked at Luna Park, a dance resort for working folk and lower middle class holiday makers.

At the very climax of a frenetic foxtrot arrived the *Razzia*. The dancers heard the bark of command. The orchestra stopped. The dancers confusedly tried to find out what had happened. Then a detective sergeant with "hair of the head and the beard trimmed in accordance with military instructions" rasped out,

"Everybody line up for examination of papers!"

A sigh of relief from most of those present. It was only the *Razzia*. But for several score among them the announcement brought anything but relief. At several of the doors arose scuffles as some persons tried to slip out of the place but were caught and held.

Then a line of those present filed past the detectives in

orderly manner, each showing his or her police card. If the date and stamp showed that the bearer, like a good German citizen, had complied with regulations and reported to the police and supplied them with the latest information about himself or herself that person was allowed to pass out of the place.

But at the end of an hour and a half sixty-three persons were detained, then bundled into a line of waiting motor patrol wagons and hustled to the great bleak structure on *Alexanderplatz* where is housed that main part of Berlin's man-hunting machine, the *Meldwesen*. The great majority of those brought along from Luna Park were in the toils because either their police cards were not up to date, or they had none at all.

But seven of the men and women held owed their detention to the fact that they fitted into "Categories 12AK and 7AK," as the instructions clicked out by the tickers in police stations read.

The *Meldwesen* is a card catalogue, the one I described somewhat in my nightmare of a criminal. Every man, woman, and child in Germany, native and foreigner has a card—or should have—with the police of whatever city he or she happens to be in. If for some reason there is no such card and a *Razzia* scoops the unfortunate individual into its net, that individual is not likely to repeat the omission again.

Punishments, ranging from a reprimand to fines and imprisonment for neglect to register await the suspect. For suspected such a person at once becomes. "If you have not registered," the police argue, "it means you have something to conceal. Now let's see what that something is!"

And they put the individual's name into the maw of that machine of card catalogues. The Berlin *Meldwesen* covers only the city of Berlin. One would imagine a rather huge steel cabinet would house that catalogue. Only in a dream or nightmare, however, could one see the proportions of that "cabinet" as it really is. When I saw it last, a few months ago, the cards for the letter H alone required *twelve rooms* to house them, the letter S *twenty-one rooms*.

Counting, say, twelve rooms to a house it takes a block of fifteen houses or one hundred and eighty rooms and a force of three hundred and sixty employees to take care of that catalogue of twenty-four million cards for Berlin alone!

Each one of these cards covers an individual who is or was in Berlin since the inception of the catalogue. On that card is registered: Say, of Carl Schmidt, honest citizen, the follow-

ing information: His first and family names, nicknames, if any; father's, mother's, brothers' and sisters' names with the number of the card of each of these as found in the *Meldwesen*; date of Carl's birth; religion; pastor; what kindergarten, school and college he attended; various occupations he engaged in, with names of employers; his various changes of residence; names of business and other associates; name of wife, her parents, children, if any, nearest other kin; records of travel, cities, hotels stopped at; remarks of any other kind the police consider interesting in his case. Cross references to any of the names mentioned on his card with an exhaustive record for each will shed still more light on Carl Schmidt.

If Carl was ever caught in a crime there would be in addition a wealth of other information about him. There would be photographs of him, front and profile, Bertillon measurements, finger-prints; a digest of his trial, a description of his crime in terms of the particular technique employed by him; his aliases, if any; his associates in crime, if any; sweethearts, enemies, etc., etc.

Downstairs in the basement sits Dr. Hans Schneikert, a scholarly looking little man, a Ph.D., and one of the world's greatest authorities on handwriting. He is not one of the mechanical men of the machine but is one of its engineers, one of the comparatively small number of men who direct the machine and who make up in initiative and brains, scholarship and breadth and depth of culture for the many mere figures they command. He has a machine of his own that works together with the *Meldwesen*.

It consists of a vast catalogue of newspaper clippings so arranged that the moment a crime is brought to his notice he lays his hands on a folio of newspaper clippings from all over the country and elsewhere, all dealing with crimes similarly committed.

Into the big card catalogue machine went the names of all those caught in the *Razzia* as well as the names of all persons having anything at all to do with the murdered Rudolph Stenghal. So minute was the search that a second cousin of Otto, Stenghal's servant, was called to police headquarters and had to supply an alibi of the night of the murder because the *Meldwesen* revealed that five years earlier he had a mistress who had also been at another time the mistress of a throat-cutting burglar executed in prison.

Into the *Meldwesen* too went eight men who had been brought along in the *Razzia* because they fitted into "cate-

gories 12AK and 7AAK." These two categories covered safe blowing with nitro-glycerine, such as was done with the Stenghal safe, and also "church thefts." It was found, however, that in each case the men had perfect alibis and were allowed to go free.

But in Dr. Schneikert's *Kriminal Archiv*, which corresponds to the "Criminal Registry Office" of Scotland Yard, were found the cards and newspaper clippings of nine men who had blown up safes with nitro-glycerine after cutting the throats of those on guard. Of these six were executed, two were awaiting death, and one was still a fugitive at liberty.

His card in the *Meldwesen* gave more than fifteen names of relations, associates, and enemies. A close watch was instantly placed over every one of these and instructions given to bring in three of them after observation for a certain time.

Meanwhile, a special "murder commission" was organized at police headquarters to deal with the Stenghal case. It happens that a special commission is appointed for each murder. But usually there is a standing "commission" already at work specializing in one crime or another. There are twenty-nine regular commissions, and the degree of minuteness to which they specialize may be gathered from the functions of several of these.

"Commission Number 1" devotes itself to "church thefts"; "Commission Number 3" to thefts of luggage and packages in railroad stations; "Commission Number 17" to marriage and marriage broker swindles; and so on.

On the Stenghal murder commission were included three members of the regular "commission on church thefts," a police surgeon, a photographer, two members of the "commission on safe-blowing burglaries," and a psychologist.

The man who was found in Dr. Schneikert's *Kriminal Archiv* to have previously cut a man's throat and then blown his safe open with nitro-glycerine and who was still at large was known as Hans Kriftel. The already active hunt for him was redoubled.

The Stenghal commission ordered brought before them Johann G., known to be an enemy of Hans Kriftel's.

Johann G., the enemy, was questioned without much pressure as it was known he would be glad to help capture Kriftel. He had not much to offer, however. He did tell the commission that the last he heard of Kriftel was that he had a sweetheart with whom he was rumored to be hiding in Schöneburg, a Berlin district.

Police found Lena S., the sweetheart; but no Kriftel. She was brought to police headquarters, then questioned. She refused to help the police. She was ready to go to prison rather than betray Hans. "Besides," she protested, "I really don't know where he is!"

The psychologist of the Stenghal commission then excused the other members of his group and addressed himself to Lena along a vastly different line.

"Listen, Lena," he said. "You may be willing to go to prison rather than send your sweetheart there. But here is something else I insist on your doing. I call off a word to you. Immediately on hearing it you must utter the first word that comes to your mind."

Lena puzzled over the ultimatum; but saw no danger in the experiment. If it was some sort of trap, she told herself, she would fool the man by calling off some word other than the one that came first into her mind. She knew enough about the Berlin police not to want to antagonize them if a little dishonesty would save her from it.

What she did not know, however, was that she was being put through the now famous "word association test," a contribution which the science of psychology has made to police arsenals; and that the psychologist on the Stenghal commission was one of the experts in that line of examination.

Before him was a split-second watch mounted on a device which also connected with wires to another device which registered the speed of heart-beat. Lena regarded uneasily the bit of rubber and silk-covered wire which the psychologist bound about her wrist where her pulse beat. But not having much knowledge of modern science Lena put it down to a bit of flummery meant merely to impress her.

"Now, ready!" called the psychologist. "Silk!"

"Waist!" called Lena promptly.

"Garden!"

"Pretty!" responded Lena. She saw no reason to guard against such innocent words and responded quickly with whatever word came to her mind first. In this way the psychologist got her average "reaction time," the quickness with which her mind apperceived one word and reacted with another.

Then he called "Hide!" There sprang to her mind her hidden lover and she shut her lips tight. The next instant she realized that it was still better to think of a word that would throw the psychologist off the scent. It took her some sec-

onds to think of a word farthest from her real thought. "City!" she said finally.

The psychologist noted that it had taken her three times as long as the reaction time for the other words; noted too the sudden and rapid increase of her heart-beat, as registered by the dial of his device; interpreted the workings of her mind and decided that if "city" was the word she finally gave, "country" was perhaps the one she hid from him. In this way her very lying was betraying her.

Rapidly he went through a list of prepared words and got her reactions, noting down her words, time of reaction, heart beat, and expression of face. After half an hour of this he rose.

"That will do now, Lena," he said. "I will add only this. If you want to give up your lover to us the surest way for you to do it will be to try to warn him. You will be watched so closely from now on that any move you make will only help us!"

He said this with much bluster and theatricality.

Lena in her much simpler way was doing some psychological analyzing herself. She had not meant to warn her lover, fearing exactly the thing this man was threatening. But his bluster now reassured her. If he had to threaten and assume a thunder-cloud expression it must mean that the police were really helpless before her; and that it was not so very dangerous a business to warn her lover. She decided to chance it anyway.

Which was exactly what the psychologist had meant her to think.

Lena went home. She knew better than to go in person to warn her lover. But from a neighbor's home in the same house she cautiously telephoned to a certain house in a small village an hour from Berlin. She might just as well have gone straight to the hiding place of her lover. For the police had canvassed what telephones there were in the house and tapped the wires.

Even while Lena was talking over the telephone other wires were humming with activity. From a police station nearest her lover's hiding place there rolled an automobile patrol wagon with a squad of "mechanical men" under a detective sergeant. A mile from a certain house the squad got out and scattered but on foot converged on that house. At a signal six detectives burst into the cottage with revolvers drawn.

They found Lena's lover, bandaged in bed, being tended by a country doctor.

"Come along!" the detective sergeant ordered.

Lena's lover, Hans Kriftel, looked up surlily.

"What have I done?" he muttered.

"You murdered Herr Rudolph Stenghal!" the detective sergeant told him. "Dress!"

Over Kriftel's face came a look of relief. "Doctor," he said to the physician, "when did you set my broken leg?"

"Two weeks ago to-day," the medical man said, alarmed at the whole proceeding.

"And how often have you tended me since then?" Kriftel went on.

"Twice every day."

"And could I have possibly gone to Berlin five days ago, broken into a house, and murdered a man without your knowing of it?" Kriftel insisted.

"Ridiculous! You never stirred out of this house since your leg was broken!" the doctor exclaimed.

The police were astounded. And a thorough investigation of both the doctor and the case he was tending soon convinced the police that Kriftel had a perfect alibi. It could not have been better if he had broken his leg purposely. The police even considered this possibility but found nothing in it.

It looked to the detective sergeant as though his superiors at police headquarters had psychologized themselves into a sort of blind alley. But he was only a sergeant of a squad of mechanical men, taught to let his superiors do the thinking. He reported back to Berlin by telephone. His superiors did not seem to be downcast.

"Bring him in, broken leg and all!" came the order. "And bring along the railroad station master. But don't use him as a prisoner."

Meanwhile headquarters had another bit of work for some one to do. In any other police system this would have been assigned to almost any detective. But it had just enough complexity about it to be a bit beyond a mechanical man. So one of the higher officials in the detective service had to do it.

For another part of the man-hunting machine had almost automatically produced a powerful link leading to the Stenghal murderers. Immediately after the first survey of the murder and robbery there had gone out a circular order to all members of the church where the contribution was taken up the night of the crime. This order instructed all contributors

of money bills to the church collection to trace back as many bills as possible until the serial numbers were secured. In two days forty-two numbers of bills of middling-size denominations were secured.

A paragraph giving these numbers was printed in the *Deutsches Nachrichten*, the daily newspaper issued by the Berlin police, whose circulation is strictly limited to police. This newspaper was also sent to neighboring cities and instructed all police to look for bills bearing the numbers printed in that paragraph; and to report instantly by telephone when one of them had been traced.

An hour before Kriftel was arrested a telephone message reached Berlin police headquarters. Five minutes later one of the higher detective officials was dressing up as a Bavarian sportsman, in knee-length "shorts," velvet jacket, little Alpine cap with the brush of a chamois in the band.

From the office he was whirled to the railroad station, where he took the train for Dresden. In that city he was met at the station by several other men attired as Bavarian sportsmen. The whole group then went to an old Bavarian inn on the bridge in the heart of the old city. For ten hours at a stretch that group drank, ate, and sang in that inn.

Then toward midnight a man came in quietly and sat down in a corner by himself. He was a huge deep-chested fellow with low forehead and deep-set little eyes which glittered with quiet but wolfish intensity. The "Bavarian" group gave him a chance to quaff several steins of *Müncher* brew. Then one of them, himself a giant, rose and walked unsteadily over to him, stein in hand.

"You're Fritz Steuben, my schoolmate!" he addressed the man. "Drink with me!"

The other shook his head. "I'm not."

"Oh, yes, you are!" insisted the other. "If you say you're not, you're a churl! Isn't he, comrades!"

The quiet man did not answer. But his eyes warned the other. True to his role of drunken man, however, the other badgered "Steuben" until he growled.

"Away from here or I'll—!" his hand gripped the handle of the heavy stein.

"Oh, so?" the drunkard cried truculently. "So you will attack me, eh? Comrades!"

At the word the others of his group jumped from their table and hurried over to their comrade. Before a fracas breaks out among Germans there is usually a great deal of

verbal commotion. The inn was thrown into an uproar. As if by magic several policemen appeared on the scene.

"I want this man arrested!" the drunkard roared, pointing at the big fellow, who had not spoken a word in all this tumult but whose look of readiness as he stood there with his hands in his pockets, put the "Bavarians" keenly on edge. At the word "arrested" his face went white and his arm twitched as if he were about to whip it out of his pocket and shoot.

Then a quick thought checked the movement. It came out later what that thought was. When a man is hunted for a major crime, hunted with the thoroughness of a German police hunt, confinement in jail for a minor offense in another city is not such a bad hiding place, this man decided.

"Oh, all right," he grumbled, his voice deep as his chest. "I'll go along."

He was searched on the spot and a revolver, a big clasp knife, and a hunting knife were taken from him. Then before he could resist steel was snapped about his wrists and a rope whisked about his legs. It was only then that he noticed how changed was the expression on the supposedly drunk "Bavarians." Whereat the prisoner's powerful body leaped convulsively, broke from his captor's hands, threshed about on the floor, put up a terrific struggle. But it was too late.

He was trussed up, thrown into a patrol wagon, taken to the railroad station, and thence by train to Berlin. Arrived at police headquarters he was faced by the station master at the village where Kritfel was captured.

"Did you see this man visit your town?" the station master was asked. The latter nodded.

The prisoner was then faced by Philip, the young "undersexton" of the church of which the murdered man was treasurer.

"Was this the man who made your acquaintance in the Kaiserhof Café and was so interested in everything concerning your church?"

Philip shamefacedly identified the stranger who had so completely pumped him and obtained from him the information that a collection would be taken on a certain night.

Then the prisoner was taken down into the basement of the great police headquarters building. Here the guards were dismissed and only three chiefs and one towering brute of a detective were left with the prisoner. The sullen captive waited impassively for whatever was forthcoming.

The door from the corridor was opened and two men rolled

in an invalid's chair with Kriftel nursing his still unmedicated leg. Four pairs of eyes eagerly regarded the look that should pass between the two prisoners the moment they saw each other. But they had two hardened criminals to deal with, with their necks in danger of the noose. Not the slightest flicker of a look on the face of either.

"Come, come, which of you will speak first and perhaps save his neck thereby?" snapped one of the chiefs.

Not a word.

Whereupon one of the detective chiefs drew a deep breath.

"All right, then we shall make you speak!"

The "third degree" is an institution not unknown to some degree with any police. But with the German police it reaches a systematic, relentless, ruthless, irresistible power unequalled anywhere else. Mere brutality does not explain it. They use along with physical "persuasion" the latest findings in psychology as a means for making closed lips open.

Scarcely anything of the technique of "sweating" ever leaks out of that basement room in the Berlin police headquarters. But the results become public in the confessions that save the Berlin courts so much trouble at the trials of the most stubborn prisoners.

In the Stenghal case forty hours after the detective chief said to his two prisoners:

"Then we shall make you speak," Kriftel spoke. He told of breaking his leg in the dark of his cellar; of the thought that came to him of how a broken leg would be a perfect alibi if he could get somebody else to execute a robbery he would plan.

He told of writing to his former partner in burglary, Colemacher, to come to him; of the details they had worked out together for robbing Stenghal; how Colemacher had broken into the house through a skylight while Otto and Stenghal were at church; how Colemacher had told him later of the struggle Stenghal had put up; how he had slit Stenghal's throat to keep him from arousing any one.

As the older criminal, shaken by forty hours of unremitting pressure, spoke, the other regarded him with only a red-eyed stare. Then he, too, spoke.

"Since you have sent me to the gallows I'll take you along for company!"

He made his threat good by involving Kriftel in another murder.

But the real agency that brought these two men to their

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end was not human. At least it was as little human as a machine can be, born of the German genius for machinery and operated by mechanical men of whom little more is demanded than to move like perfect cogs.

CHAPTER XVI

BRAINS VERSUS MACHINE

TWO things about European criminals and police have for me fascination above all others. One is the dash and imagination of the French crook. The other is the nearest thing possible to having an actual machine for capturing criminals, the man-hunting machine of the Berlin police. And this is why—

The French crook, like the French chef, will put a spice, a flavor into what he does which will distinguish it from plain everyday fare. And the Berlin police will attack the most unique crime in exactly the same way that they attack the most stereotyped—with a machine. And with mechanical men as its cogs.

But it is a machine of enormous resources and makes me think of that mill of the gods which may be slow, but grinds exceedingly small.

I was keenly interested therefore in seeing how that Berlin police machine, with its minimum of human individuality, would work against a pair of clever, highly individual French crooks.

These two gentlemen were anything but provincial. To them the whole world was their oyster and they opened it with every variety of jimmy or with nitro-glycerine and oxy-acetylene torches when necessary.

They operated in half a dozen countries in Europe, spoke languages like natives, knew the temper and methods of the police of whatever country and city they elected for their exploits, and were so clever in their touch-and-go that although they had been operating for some years they were only vaguely known to the police of any of the countries they visited.

This was due partly to the fact that they distributed the favors of their visits pretty evenly, never staying long enough in any one country or city to create that degree of familiarity on the part of the police which would embarrass the sensibilities of our French crooks.

Another reason why these two had such an agreeable time

in their unconventional career was the richness and variety of their equipment. They were both good looking, smart dressers, excellent actors and entirely unscrupulous—a combination irresistible to many women. And many women in the different countries not only did not resist them, but unknown to themselves served as an excellent system of spies.

With their familiarity with the language of a foreign country, with that touch of difference which often gives a foreigner the advantage over a native suitor, with good looks and smart dress, with dash and a clever courting technique the two French crooks managed to keep up a pleasant state of relations with a number of the fair sex in each country they visited.

They chose these women not for beauty or charm—which made these women all the more grateful; but because they were interestingly situated as sources of a certain kind of information. This, of course, the ladies did not know; their hearts, understandably enough, ascribed other reasons for the interest these two good looking foreigners showed in them.

But then our two friends rather specialized in not letting people know things about them.

Just before these two made their unseen bow in Berlin one of the French crooks cultivated the acquaintance of a stenographer in a big gold and silversmiths' establishment on Unter den Linden. This young woman, quite homely and correspondingly neglected by dashing looking gentlemen, had left the store at the end of a working day and was given a seat in a crowded subway train by a young gentleman of prepossessing appearance. Now, such courtesy is not too familiar a phenomenon in Berlin subways and the young woman's heart beat as though she had found a gold piece.

To her increasing excitement the young man spoke to her; seemed flatteringly embarrassed, proved to be a foreigner, though he spoke German excellently; and asked her several things about Berlin. She was a serious minded young woman and justifiably enjoyed the confidence of her employers, the gold and silversmiths.

But also she was a woman, which means human enough to respond to an appeal for assistance, especially when it came from a charming, well dressed foreigner. The upshot was that the young man took the young woman to tea and acquaintance ripened.

With an absence of ego that charmed her the young man confined the talk mostly to her own interests, among which came naturally her work with the gold and silversmiths. In

this way the young man learned that her employers had just bought a large and valuable dinner service of gold from a princeling of the overthrown Russian imperial dynasty. That dinner set had arrived and was for the time being kept in the big safe in back of the store.

Soon after this the young man acquired an unfortunate headache which aroused the young woman's sympathy and necessitated the young man's departure. That night the iron door in the back of the gold and silversmiths' establishment opened softly, but not in response to a key.

It was well on toward three in the morning and dark in the store. But the two who entered from the rear did not strike a light until all doors and windows in the room where the big safe stood had been well covered.

Then from a large valise one of the men took out an assortment of tools. From a long satchel held by the other man came a portable oxygen tank. The two men knelt in front of the big safe, and as they worked whispered, but with no sign of trepidation.

Soon a match spurted, a jet of bluish flame appeared at the end of a torchlike contrivance one of the men held and played on the safe door. The flame ate into the steel door.

In an hour that steel door swung open without any further fuss and the two men began removing the gold dinner service from the safe.

They wrapped the separate gold vessels in paper and then put them into boxes of various kinds which they found in the store. When they got through doing this the pile of boxes made a bulk considerably larger than a steamer trunk would hold.

To remove this from the store, by way of the rear or any other way, without attracting the attention of the methodical police on the beat would be a problem calculated to make most thieves pause. But these two gentlemen had their own way of meeting this problem.

In the dark they sat, chatted quietly, and waited for daylight to come. At about six in the morning it was light enough for them to continue with their plan. One of them took up a broom and a handful of cleaning rags and calmly went to the front part of the store. Here he lit the electric lights in window and store and let any one who passed see exactly what he was doing.

He was dressed in the frowsy costume of a store porter, with that unshaven, unslept look of a drudge who has to work while

others are enjoying the best part of their night's sleep. He swept the store and carefully wiped the dust off the counters. But he worked always with his back to the street.

The other man, dressed as a sort of combination bookkeeper and shipping clerk, wore the green celluloid visor of the man who works long over books with only weak eyes to help him. In this way his face, too, was hidden. He was piling up a series of boxes, apparently for delivery. He had packed them first into a big, handsome wooden chest, in which the service first came to the store.

Then, changing his mind, he shoved the wooden chest out of the street door and let it stay there. Then he did up the boxes into three big packages and went out to hunt for a taxi or cab.

The policeman on the beat passed on the other side. He saw the store of the gold and silversmiths lit up. He saw through the window a figure dressed as he had seen it often before early mornings in that store—though perhaps never before quite so early. Then he saw the empty wooden chest in front of the street door and the pile of boxes just inside the door.

He paused, kept on looking and held a short debate with himself. According to the strict regulations under which that policeman lived and breathed he had to note in his memorandum book everything out of the ordinary he saw on his beat, no matter how minute a departure from routine. Also to investigate it.

The debate with himself consisted of whether he should cross the street and receive from the two men working so early in the gold and silversmiths' shop the assurance that it was perfectly all right for them to be there. But it would be such a useless procedure. For he recognized the blue-checked jumper of the store porter, just as he had seen it for years in that store, and the coatless figure of the bookkeeper was also familiar to him, even though neither man had his face turned to him. So the debate closed with the policeman merely noting in his notebook:

6.45 A.M.

Porter and bookkeeper of Hans & Bartels, gold and silversmiths, at work early in store, with lights on. Large wooden case in front of store. If it remains there for half an hour will report the matter as per regulations.

Then he continued on his beat and soon turned the corner.

Soon after that the "bookkeeper" returned with a horse cab he had found. He and the porter loaded a trunkful of

boxes into the cab, the cabby lending a hand. When the last package was on board the "porter" put on his coat and hat and got into the cab with the bookkeeper and the packages and all rode off.

At seven o'clock came the real porter to work. When he came into the room where the safe was he broke out into a startled German oath and jumped for the telephone. Within a quarter of an hour there was commotion converging on that store. The owners, the policeman on beat, and several detective chiefs from headquarters swooped down and swore, barked commands, made notes, kept telephone wires hot.

But the royal prince's gold dinner service was gone. And the robbers had not left even the slightest clues to themselves.

By eight o'clock the whole neighborhood was shocked and gathered before the store. In the rear of the store detectives were at work, mechanical men receiving instructions from three of the engineers of the man-hunting machine of Berlin. In the street a crowd was excitedly asking itself questions as to what had happened, how it happened, and what was being done to bring the robbers to justice at once.

It was not surprising therefore that still two others should ask questions, the same questions, only more intelligently.

They were two top-hatted, smartly dressed young bloods, swinging their walking sticks, when obviously they would have done better to use sticks as pillars of support. For they looked and behaved as if they had spent the night in vinous pleasures. Their mood at present, however, seemed serious, that of citizens anxious to help. They pestered everybody with questions and suggestions.

Finally a detective, one of the mechanical cogs of the Berlin machine, came out of the store bound on an errand. The two young bloods buttonholed him and actually started to pump him. But as they were blocking his movement on his mechanical errand he thundered, exactly as he was used to being thundered at by his superiors:

"Out of the way or I'll arrest you for interfering with the police!"

Whereat the young bloods became indignant. One of them bitterly said:

"Very well, if you refuse the assistance of two high-born gentlemen, we wash our hands of the whole matter!"

Off they walked, arm in arm, in high dudgeon, walking almost stately. At the first turn of the street, their walk lost

some of the stateliness, though it gained in steadiness. At the next street they hailed a taxi.

And once inside all dignity went to the winds and both young men leaned back on the cushions and roared and roared with laughter.

But meanwhile the Berlin man-hunting machine began to grind. Every aspect of the burglary was first fitted into known categories and registered under numbers and letters. The door in the rear had been jimmied under category 12WKL; the safe had been opened by methods under category 9PWS. The subsequent conduct of the burglars came under category so-and-so.

But not all of the burglary lent itself to orderly cataloguing. That idea of turning on the lights in the store, waiting for daylight, and then calmly letting the wide world look on while they went off with the loot shocked the Berlin police with its perfect disregard of orderly probabilities.

Why, if these burglars knew anything at all they would have known that according to regulations they would have been discovered at their work at half a dozen different points!

But since the burglars apparently did not know this, the brains of the Berlin police machine decided, they must be foreigners. There was something of the foreigner's lack of fear of the Berlin police, a dash and insolence in the job, a light touch that was foreign to the German criminal. And from police headquarters came back the first reports confirming this.

For all the information gathered at the scene of the crime had been put into the maw of the *Meldwesen*, the main part of the Berlin police machine, the catalogue of twenty million cards that takes up one hundred and eighty rooms and keeps three hundred and sixty people busy. Mechanically the *Meldwesen* took the information handed it, tried to fit it with the vast mass of information catalogued there, and found no niche into which the burglary at Hans & Bartels exactly fitted.

But there was the policeman's memorandum entry: "6:45 A.M. Porter and bookkeeper of Hans & Bartels . . . at work early . . . large wooden case in front of store. . ."

First the policeman himself was charged with neglect of duty for not crossing and making sure that the figures he thought were the porter and the bookkeeper were actually the people he thought they were. He had violated paragraph so-

and-so of his regulations and would be sufficiently punished. Meanwhile his report was used, such as it was.

There was that "large wooden box" in his report. Its size and shape would help in tracing the loot—if the burglars took the gold service away in it. But here one of the mechanical men brought in a report.

He had been sent out to scour the whole block for any one who had passed that store prior to the discovery of the crime. He brought in a porter who had noticed that box in front of the store, though the store itself was closed and its lights out. He must have seen it therefore after the robbers had left. Which meant (a) that the robbers had left the box behind; (b) that some one else had stolen it.

The "commission on thefts from jewelry stores and pawnshops," a committee of detective superiors specializing only in this field and now at work on the Hans & Bartels case, thereupon sent out squads of mechanical men to hunt for that box. Some one in the neighborhood had probably taken it, for no one living farther away would take the trouble and risk being caught with it.

Whereupon ensued a procedure which citizens in Anglo-Saxon countries would not understand, much less tolerate. In Anglo-Saxon countries the feeling, supported by law, is that a man's house is his castle and even the police cannot enter it to conduct a search without a court warrant issued for that particular search in that particular house, a warrant based on good and sufficient reason. They feel differently in Germany.

To find that wooden packing case the mechanical men entered every house and home on that block, entered it and searched it thoroughly—and did it all with the full sanction of the law behind it, but without a scrap of paper or warrant touching on that particular search. All that is needed is for some police official to decide that "such search will lead to the discovery of crime." As one police lieutenant put it: "I can search my neighbor's house and lock him up for twenty-four hours, although he may be as innocent as a lamb."

It is this wide discretionary power to invade private homes in a wholesale manner that gives the mechanical men of the Berlin police—backed by the prodigious machine of which they are cogs—an advantage that puts them on a par with the much cleverer police of other cities. It was this power therefore that discovered within an hour the missing packing case in the cellar of a janitor's assistant half a block away.

For an hour that frightened youngster was in exceedingly

hot water. He was pumped, investigated, psychology tested within an inch of his wits. But a search of his past life in the *Meldwesen* and a thorough grilling brought only the information that he had stolen the packing case for firewood; that he saw the two who had robbed the store, but not their faces; that, like the policeman on the beat, he thought they were the porter and the bookkeeper of the store. He had waited till he saw the two drive away in a cab in the direction of the railroad station, the Annhalter Bahnhof.

Whereupon the machine ground out a search for every cabby who had found fares in that street early that morning. Inevitably, since the *Meldwesen* and other systems of registrations in Berlin are so thoroughly organized, so systematically kept and minutely informative, the cabby who took the two men was turned up.

He testified that he was called at such and such a corner at about such-and-such a time by a man with a green visor over his face, obviously a bookkeeper. He had helped him and a porter, whose face he did not notice very well, as the man kept a high coat collar turned up against the chill morning air, helped them load a lot of parcels into the cab.

Then he took the two men and the parcels to the Annhalter Bahnhof.

There one of the men, the "bookkeeper," gave him forty "gold marks," wherewith to buy railroad tickets for Leipzig for the two men, while they remained at the curb to guard the parcels. Cabby bought the tickets, handed them over to the two men, received a three-mark tip, and drove off. It was the last he saw of the two men.

But investigation at the Bahnhof and by telephone to Leipzig showed that no such passengers had taken the train for Leipzig. For the tickets bought were traced by their serial numbers—and no such numerals had been taken up by any conductor. Which meant that the business of sending the cabby to buy tickets for Leipzig was intended as a blind.

Therefore, reasoned almost mechanically the "commission on thefts from jewelry stores and pawnshops," another cab or taxi must have taken the two men and their parcels *from* the railroad station; since none of the ticket takers in the railroad station remembered two such men with parcels taking any of the trains that morning.

So another wholesale call and search and series of questionings brought a taxi driver who had been hailed from the curb of the Annhalter Bahnhof by two men answering the vague

description gathered thus far. He had taken the two men and their parcels to the corner of Kurfürstendamm and Morenstrasse, where they got out. But when a squad of mechanical men were rushed to that corner the trail died out.

Meanwhile, however, every employee and member of Hans & Bartels had been closely questioned. The remotest possibility was canvassed. Somebody had blabbed; it was clear, of the arrival of that gold dinner service. Among the possibilities canvassed was that the stenographer, being a woman, had talked, albeit her reputation was good.

Under expert quizzing it developed that while she had neither sweetheart nor girl friend to whom she had talked of the gold service, she thought she *may* have talked about it to a "gentleman friend" she had met recently. The commission pressed further.

How recently had she met him? How had she met him? When they found that he was a foreigner, although he spoke German excellently, the whole commission hitched chairs forward and began to probe until the poor girl began to feel responsible for the robbery.

She gave the name he had given her as his. A telephone query to the *Meldwesen* brought out the fact that there was no such person in Berlin. Or if there were he had not reported to the police. The address he had given—a hotel—was likewise false.

But the restaurant at which they had had tea yielded something. The waiter remembered them, and remembered that the young man had paid with a bill of fairly large denomination. The bill was one of seven others found in the bank deposit made by that restaurant, but which of the seven bills in question it was would be difficult to find out—difficult, that is, for any one but a machine.

The serial number of each of the seven bills was taken. Each was then traced back. Starting from each bank of origin, the bills were then traced again as they left the banks. Fortunately for the police, the bill was of large enough denomination to make this operation a tremendous task, but not an impossible one.

The particular bill paid by the elusive young foreigner was finally found by elimination. Then the trail led to a money changer who had given the young man the bill in exchange for French francs. But there again the trail stopped.

The young man had come to the money exchange from the

street and left as little indication behind him as any other stranger.

Nevertheless, they were francs, and not rubles or lei or pounds sterling. And the enormous but finely cogged machine in *Alexanderplatz* seized on the gossamer thread of clew, and slowly, delicately began to weave something more of it.

A jaunty young man stepped into a money changer's bureau a day later and, taking out a bill for a thousand francs, asked for German marks in exchange. The money changer counted out the marks, shoved it over to the young man, then said mechanically:

"Name and address, please, on this blank."

The young man had turned to leave, but at the words paused.

"What's the necessity? That bill is perfectly good."

"Don't know," the changer replied laconically. "Police orders."

"Since when?"

"Yesterday afternoon."

The young man reflected an instant, then cheerfully signed a name and address and left.

But in his hotel room he said to another young man who occupied the adjoining room:

"These Boches will be asking every purchaser of a box of matches to present a birth certificate next, I suppose." And he told of the incident at the money changer's.

"Of course you gave a fake name and address?" the other asked.

"Of course."

The two smiled quietly and almost forgot the incident. They were busy sending various packages by express to a small hardware dealer doing a quiet business in a town on the French border. The packages were all labeled "Tin trays," "Enamel basins," "Nickel knives and forks," and the like.

But the young man who told of the incident at the money changer's would have done better to have given the right name and address when he changed his francs. For there were so many who had changed francs that day that even a machine could not do more than just check up the many names and addresses that came in that way. In every instance where on checking up there proved to be a real person at a real address the machine dropped the matter.

But when it came to a name and an address which on checking up at the *Meldwesen*, that vast catalogue did not

answer with an automatic "Present," the machine began to make alarming noises, like a bit of mechanism gone awry.

"Why isn't that address right?" the brain part of the machine asked. "Because," answered machinelike logic, "the person who gave it probably shies at truth in such matters. If so, let's learn some more about him."

So the money changer who had furnished the address in question was told to trace the serial numbers of as many as possible of the German bills he had given the young man who was so inexact about his name and place of residence.

Meanwhile the young man himself had another incident to report to his friend that evening.

"Funny," he said, but did not look too much amused, "but these damn Boches will be cataloguing every breath we draw pretty soon. I went to the post office to send off the last of our packages and paid for the expressage with a fifty-mark note. Well, I was leaving the building when a clerk came running out after me.

"Pardon me, *mein herr*, but didn't you give me this bill?" he asked, showing me one.

"I looked at it, and it was the bill I had given, not him, but another clerk. I could tell by a bit of transparent mucilage paper with which one corner had been strengthened. But of course I told him it was *not* the bill I had paid with.

"The clerk looked startled and suspicious. 'At any rate, would you be good enough to step into the office with me to tell my superior that?' he insisted.

"Naturally I told him I hadn't the time. But he became insistent. 'My superior has ordered me to bring you back!' he cried. 'And what the devil is your superior to me?' I demanded, and started off. Well, would you believe it? He seized my sleeve to detain me! But as you may imagine, he didn't hold it very long."

He grinned, and the other grinned, too. For the other knew what had happened, without being told. When the insistent clerk innocently seized the young man's sleeve his fingers pressed it. The next moment he snatched his hand away with a loud cry.

Under the sleeve was another sleeve of leather thickly mounted with sharp, short tacks, pointing outward. And before the clerk could summon a policeman the young man leaped to the step of a rapidly moving cable car—against regulations—and was off.

The two young men enjoyed the joke on the clerk for a

short while—then they became irritable. "What the devil's the matter with this fool city the last two or three days? Seems to me every step one takes is being measured and registered by some machine. Thank Heaven we're off to-night!" one of them summed it up.

They packed their grips, dressed the part of two small-town merchants, got their forged French passports stamped with police permission to leave Berlin, and got on the night express in the direction of the border town to which they had been expressing their "hardware" packages. On the train they slept well. Had they known it they would have been troubled by the fact that they slept so well. For during the night the conductor and several other minor officials had entered every other sleeping compartment to examine passports and papers. Only the sleeping compartment of the young men was undisturbed.

At an express stop nearest the border the two got off and took a local train for their last destination in Germany. Half a dozen other men got off with them. The two gave them a casual habitual bit of scrutiny. But they found so little distinctive about the others, and got such a sense of having seen scores and scores of just such men, with just such hair and beards and manner, that after a moment or two the young men dismissed them from consideration.

On the local train the vaunted German thoroughness of system seemed for once to have slipped a cog. For the conductor forgot to collect their tickets; indeed, he passed them several times without giving them a glance. It almost seemed as if he avoided looking at them.

At the border town the two got off and were met at the station by the hardware dealer to whom they had been expressing the packages. He looked suspiciously at the half dozen other passengers who got out with the two young men.

"Seems to me you've had quite a lot of company on your trip," he said. "Are you sure none of them have been asking you questions?"

The two young men smiled. "Not only they, but even the conductor left us alone. He didn't even collect our tickets. Here they are."

The other did not seem as amused as they expected him to be.

"Hm! That is certainly exceptional," he grumbled. "And I don't like the exceptional. Healthy life in this country is

always on schedule. But come along! To-night will see you out of the country with that stuff, thank goodness!"

"Don't worry!" one of the young men assured him. "If nothing happened to us in Berlin, nothing will happen in this one-horse town."

"You may as well say that if it didn't rain on you it couldn't have rained at all," the hardware man grumbled. "But I'll be glad when you're over the border."

As the afternoon wore on, however, and nothing occurred to disturb his two guests, who stayed inconspicuously at his house, even the hardware man became easier in his mind.

When night came he went out into his barn and harnessed two horses to a wagon covered with a tarpaulin under which a load of cabbages was plainly visible. He himself was dressed as a farm hand now, and when he got to the driver's seat his own wife told herself there was nothing to worry about with a make-up like that.

The man drove off with the wagon toward the boundary line. At the next crossroad two other farm hands in a small hauling truck, which, however, was empty, swung into the road and rolled after the cabbage wagon. They seemed bound in the same direction, for they kept the wagon in sight for a long time until they came to the toll bridge crossing a little stream which formed the boundary line at that point.

The farm hand who drove the cabbage wagon got down and showed his identification papers—such as they were—to the gendarme with the lantern. The two men in the automobile behind his wagon watched the proceedings apparently with indifference. But when the gendarme began scratching his head as he examined the cart driver's papers and finally called to some of his mates in the guardhouse, the two in the automobile looked at each other.

At the call of the gendarme there issued a surprising number of men from the guardhouse and surrounded the driver of the cabbage cart. The two in the automobile grew restive. Then they saw several of the men jump to the hubs of the cart and start rummaging among the cabbages.

Thereupon things began to happen fast. The two in the car stepped on the gas, backed quickly and, making a short turn, started back the way they had come. But behind them stood a big automobile truck barring the road, and from it jumped several other men. Dark as the road was, the two in the machine saw that the men running toward them all carried arms.

Without the least hesitation the two men in the car jerked the wheel a quarter spin and started the machine across a field. The men in the road sprinted after them. A furrow caught the lunging car and sent it bowling over. But the two in the car, with the agility of acrobats, sprang out and raced to a near-by barn, at their heels a dozen shouting men. And now came the sound of revolver fire behind them.

The two gained the barn a bare dozen feet ahead of the others, but had ample time to bar the heavy door. A few seconds later there were thundering blows at the door, heavy voices clamoring: "Open, in the name of the law!"

"Listen!" came from within the barn. "We can see you. Before you get us, some of you will get our bullets. We have many of them. We are good marksmen, and are determined not to be captured. Keep away!"

Then the men at bay heard a military order. Through a barn window they saw a dozen men get into a sort of squad formation. They were the mechanical men of the Berlin police machine, men who had spent at least nine years in the German army—out of whom every bit of individuality had been drilled. But they were also men who were drilled to obey even an order to advance on big guns to certain death. And they obeyed as only mechanical men would.

The two inside did not want to go to a German prison. But neither did they want to die just yet. They held a whispered conference, and chose a term for burglary as the lesser of two evils. A minute later they came out of the barn, their hands high in the air.

In prison one of the young men said: "If I knew that any one detective more than others had caught us, I might have nursed a dream of vengeance. But it wasn't any man or group of men who got us; it was a machine!"

CHAPTER XVII

TOO MANY CLEWS

IN my last Chapter on the man-hunting police machine of Berlin I told how that machine behaved in a case that furnished it at first with not a wisp of clew wherewith to work. Working in the air, figuratively and literally, the machine actually found grist in the fact that it had not a clew to work with.

A companion piece to that article must be this story of a case wherein the same machine had trouble because it had too many clews, an embarrassment of riches that threatened to clog its wheels.

It began quite simply—too simply—with a burglary in the Charlottenburg section of Berlin. The home of a Bourse broker was broken into and robbed of a considerable amount of silver and jewelry. The burglar or burglars left no trace of themselves, none, that is, that was discovered by the squad of mechanical men sent there, the rank and file of the detective service, mere cogs out of whom every bit of individuality and initiative has been drilled.

Their squad leader reported this over the telephone. Whereupon a “commission on larcenies in flats and tenements”—a group of headquarters experts specializing narrowly in such burglaries as the one in question—came to make its own examination.

They found that entry had been made by jimmying the cellar door to a built-in stairway used as a fire-escape; then by expert lockpicking of the door to the apartment. The job was done between three o'clock in the morning and dawn. It was a professional affair, as proved by the fact that no fingerprints were found.

Then the burglar or burglars repaired to the kitchen and leisurely made a lunch and ate it. The commission studied their menu more than anything else that had to do with the robbery, it seemed to the astonished host.

But the commission, investigating the case with a procedure so completely predetermined that it amounted to machine

work, knew what it was doing. The victim of the robbery stared in wonder while the experts triumphantly set down such momentous discoveries as that six eggs, seven slices of bacon, and a whole jar of marmalade had been consumed by the midnight visitor or visitors.

It was a question, from the amount of food consumed, whether there were two men eating with moderate appetites, or one man with a ravenous hunger. From the disposition of the crumbs of the feast, however, the commission decided that but one man had eaten, one man with a remarkable appetite. Which in turn pointed to a one-man job.

Back to police headquarters came the commission and fed its findings into the machine that hunts criminals in Berlin. The chief part of that machine, as I pointed out before, is that huge catalogue of twenty-million cards called the *Meldwesen*, an alphabetical record which it takes one hundred and sixty rooms to house, the most exhaustive body of information about human beings ever assembled. Most of it is information on respectable citizens, foreigners and transients in Berlin.

But part of it is the *Kriminal Archiv*, where, in addition to the regular *Meldwesen* card, there is a rich addition of data on every criminal who was convicted in Berlin, or who ever operated in Berlin even if convicted elsewhere.

The commission had entered its findings of the burglary in question on a card. Then it put that card into the *Meldwesen* machine to make it produce a solution, somewhat as one drops a penny into a slot machine.

What happened really was the card was given to a spectated mechanical man, one of the three hundred and sixty who operate the *Meldwesen* machine, and he hunted for information that would correspond to that on the card. But the man and his search were so mechanical in their nature that it was really the working of a machine.

It will help understanding the present case if I give a sketch of the kind of card continental police keep in their criminal records. Here, for instance, is one formula of ten headings under which a crime is recorded by the police:

1—*Classword*; kind of property attacked, whether dwelling house, lodging house, hotel, etc.

2—*Entry*; the actual point of entry, whether front window, back window, etc.

3—*Means*; whether with implements or tools, such as a ladder, jimmy, etc.

4—*Object*; kind of property taken.

5—*Time*; not only time of day or night, but whether church time, market day, during meal hours, etc.

6—*Style*; whether the criminal, to obtain entrance, described himself as mechanic, canvasser, agent, etc.

7—*Tale*; any disclosure or story as to his alleged business or errand which the criminal may make.

8—*Pals*; whether crime was committed with confederates.

9—*Transport*; whether bicycle or other vehicle was used in connection with the crime.

10—*Trademark*; whether criminal committed any unusual act in connection with the crime, such as poisoning a dog, changing his clothes, eating a meal in the house robbed, leaving a note for the owner, etc. Within a quarter of an hour after the mechanical man, so to say, dropped the card with the findings of the commission into the *Meldwesen*, it produced a name, a man whose previous burglary, as described in the *Meldwesen* and *Kriminal Archiv*, resembled so closely the burglary in question that a squad of mechanical men was sent out to bring the man in—for the *Kriminal Archiv* even keeps close track of the movements and hanging-out places of criminals who are out of prison.

This man's card showed that in a previous burglary he also had jimmied the cellar door of a built-in fire escape stairway in an apartment house; picked the lock leading to the apartment, had taken silverware and jewelry; had made an enormous meal in the kitchen of the apartment, and betrayed an inordinate appetite for bacon and eggs and marmalade for dessert.

There were other cards that showed elements of similarity with the present burglary—but none that showed such exact correspondence.

The man was brought in and closely questioned as to his movements on the night of the burglary—for, of course, he strenuously denied that it was he who had done this particular job. But when it came to furnishing the alibi, his protestations of innocence were little helped. For the story he told seemed weak.

He said that on that particular night he had scraped up an acquaintance with a stranger in a tavern; they had drunk a lot; and what he next remembered was waking up in his room with a splitting headache next morning. But the *Kriminal Archiv* card pointed so unmistakably to him and

his alibi was so little convincing that the police felt little hesitation in holding him.

The following week another burglary occurred in a well-to-do part of Berlin. This time it was a jewelry store that was robbed. It was the "Commission on thefts from jewelry stores and pawnshops" that investigated the case and reported on a card the technique of that particular "job." The card, as in the other case, was put into the *Meldwesen*, and as before, it found in a short time a suspect whose record in the *Kriminal Archiv* so closely corresponded to the details of this burglary that he was haled to police headquarters and without much ado held for trial.

For his attempt at an alibi for the night of the burglary was so feeble—although he protested as heatedly as the other burglar that he was innocent—that he was laughed at for his story. He had been to visit some cronies, he recounted, and was on his way home toward midnight when in a lonely quarter, just after he had turned a corner, he had been slugged from behind with a blackjack. When he recovered it was still dark. But it took him so long to get out of the cellar where he found himself that dawn was in the sky when he got home.

His cronies, of course, corroborated his statement, and he offered to show the very cellar where he found himself on recovering consciousness. But neither offer of proof was taken seriously enough by the police to free him from being held for trial.

But one of the commission remarked how similar to the alibi furnished by the burglar in the first case I recorded here was the alibi of the suspect in the second case. The member of the commission remarked this idly as a sort of interesting coincidence. Then he forgot the matter—until it came back to him with added force two weeks later.

For a veritable epidemic of burglaries seemed to have broken out in Berlin, and there were features in the third case I record here that made the member of the commission, who remarked on the coincidence I noted above, think hard.

Here was a successful burglary in the home of an antique collector; with well defined "trade marks" of the burglar who did the job. And in this case the description tallied closely with another description found in the *Kriminal Archiv* section of the *Meldwesen*.

This man with whose record the latest burglary corresponded so closely was brought to the police chiefs and questioned as

to the night of the burglary. He grew confused, then clearly evasive.

Finally he broke down and confessed that he had been planning to give a party to his friends, but had run short of funds. On the night in question he had broken into a delicatessen store and taken a quantity of food and sweets for his party. It was petty larceny to which he confessed, and the police saw in this an attempt on his part to escape punishment for the more serious burglary.

His alibi was of course investigated and was borne out to the extent that the delicatessen store he indicated had really been broken into on the night in question. But the police held that the suspect may have heard of the lesser burglary and remembered it to use it as an alibi.

The suspect continued, however, to protest his innocence, and racked his brains how to convince the police that he was telling the truth. Suddenly he remembered something.

"You say it was not I who broke into the delicatessen store on the night of the fifteenth. Well, here is proof. I was climbing up on a barrel to reach some of the imported caviar on an upper shelf in the store room when a nail I did not see tore my trouser leg and gashed my shin. Here is the mark on my leg still. And there is the rip on my trouser leg. Let me go with you and I will show you the nail."

That sounded real, and the police, looking for that nail, found it just as described by the suspect. That was not enough for them. They took the nail, the point of which was covered with brown rust, to the chemical laboratory of the Berlin police. Here the rust was scraped off. A dilute solution was made of it, and this was analyzed.

It was found to be rust caused by blood. A drop of blood was then taken from the wrist of the suspect. A system of reagents and a count of blood corpuscles was then used on the test of both the blood solution taken from the nail and of the suspect's blood. They indicated the same blood.

The police were puzzled. The "trade marks" of the burglary at the antiquary's tallied so perfectly with the suspect's record in the *Kriminal Archiv* that mere coincidence seemed too simple an explanation. Also as such a coincidence would weaken the prestige of the *Meldwesen*, the police looked for some other theory.

"Not only is there the 'coincidence' of the exact duplication of technique in the burglary 'trade mark,' but there is also the coincidence that the suspect in the case established his

alibi only by the narrowest of margins. No, let us see if there isn't some other explanation."

Deadly German machine-like logic began to weave theories.

"The 'trade marks' are exactly alike. Therefore, either the same man was at the bottom of it, or some pupil or confederate of his. Or—some one imitated that 'trade mark.' But the suspect has practically proved his alibi. And we know from his record that he has never had an accomplice or partner in crime, always played a lone hand. Therefore some one has imitated his 'trade mark.' If so, why?"

"To cast suspicion on the suspect," was the tentative conclusion. The suspect was then asked, had he any enemies? No, he replied; and the fact that it would have served him better to say yes helped belief.

"Then," decided German police logic, "it was done by some one who knew of his technique and, though not an enemy, imitated it to throw suspicion off himself and on to this man. But the 'trade mark' tallies so closely with our record of it that *it must have been studied either at the scene of the burglaries or in our own files.*"

The first seemed improbable. But to assume the latter was uncomfortable. That would mean that some one on the inside at police headquarters who had access to the *Kriminal Archiv* may have studied the record of the suspect and given it to some one else to imitate and thereby throw the police off the scent. In American terminology of the underworld, somebody may have "planted" the suspect.

That would be so novel and effective a device that one could expect its use again. Perhaps it had even already been used. In examining this possibility the police reexamined the cases of the suspects in the two preceding burglaries. The one accused of burglary of the Bourse broker's house still persisted in his protestations that he was "dead drunk" on the night in question. The other, accused of burglary of the jewelry store, clung just as strenuously to his story that he had been blackjacked on the night of that burglary.

For the first time the police became eager to believe these two men. For if their stories were true, it meant that the newest theory of the police was likely to be a fact.

For now a theoretical but highly interesting figure began to emerge in the minds of the chiefs of the Berlin police. It was that of a sort of super-burglar who studied the technique of other, lesser burglars, who then proceeded to imitate their tech-

nique and did it so well that it fooled the experts, readers, so to speak, of the handwriting of burglars' work.

At the same time confederates of the super-burglar would have arranged matters so with the burglar to be "planted" so that he would have a difficult time establishing an alibi for himself on the night his technique was imitated in a real burglary.

Such a super-burglar would have his accomplice on the inside at police headquarters to acquaint him with the "trade marks" to be imitated. This conclusion was reached in the secrecy of the council room of the detective chiefs. Then followed a secret and minute search in the *Meldwesen* of the records of the several hundred men and women who were themselves employed in handling the huge card catalogue.

But these had been chosen with especial care and the secret investigation bore out the records of scrupulous honesty of all the clerks and office staff.

However—so minute was the search—it was found that on several occasions when one of the scrub women employed in the *Meldwesen* offices was ill her place had been taken by a daughter of hers. On the record card of the daughter it was found that she had been among those taken to police headquarters in a *Razzia*, or police raid, for the purpose of examination of identity papers.

She had been taken to police headquarters not because of anything against her, but because of the company she kept. For there were a number of men and women at that dance who were recorded in the *Kriminal Archiv*. When, however, a young man of respectable reputation as a delicatessen store clerk came forward as her escort to the dance, she was allowed to go free.

But now interest on the part of the police centered on her once more. Unknown to her a minute investigation into her life was made, and her movements were followed. She was a young woman in her late twenties, not good looking, but greedy for pleasure. Although her old mother worked for a living scrubbing floors in the *Meldwesen* office, this robust young woman did no work of any sort. Yet she did not seem to lack the means wherewith to dress and eat well.

It was then found that the young clerk who had acted as her escort to the dance where the *Razzia* had taken place, was a sad suitor of hers. She cared more for the company of other young men and some not so young, but much more able to spend money on her. Assiduous shadowing of the

young woman, Anna Kurtz, discovered to the police one suitor or favorite of Anna's, who took her out often to cafés and theaters.

This man was traced and identified as Henkel, a former clerk or a professional bondsman, who specialized in furnishing bail to those arrested on criminal charges. Henkel did not seem to have any means of support more visible than Anna's. But he did not lack the means wherewith to give both himself and her many treats at expensive restaurants.

Meanwhile word came to the overseer of the *Meldwesen* menial workers that Anna's mother was ill again and that her daughter, Anna, would, as usual, take her place that night after office hours. This information was passed on to the members of the "commission" at work on the series of burglaries imitated by the "Mocking Bird," as the police chiefs now spoke of the theoretical figure they had built up.

The full *Meldwesen* staff works only during the day. At six o'clock the day clerks go home and a small staff or night shift take their places. At this time too come the scrub women and office cleaners.

That evening Anna Kurtz came in her mother's place, and with mop and scrubbing pail went leisurely to work. Ordinarily there were clerks about in the *Kriminal Archiv* offices. But this evening they seemed to be in a truant mood, and were gathered in the main office, having a good time apparently.

Anna found herself alone in the office of the *Kriminal Archiv*. But she did not seem to mind it. She even glanced occasionally into the corridor as if to assure herself that no one would interrupt her at her work. Several times she seemed to hear some one coming. At such moments she would quickly resume her position on the floor by the side of her scrubbing.

But at about eleven in the evening she rose suddenly and went to one of the cabinets of the *Archiv*. Taking out a key and a slip of paper from the bosom of her dress, she unlocked one of the drawers and glancing at a name written on the paper, she searched and quickly found a certain card in the cabinet. For some minutes she copied on a slip of paper what she read on that card.

Then she put the card back in its place, closed the cabinet and locked it, thrust the key and the slip of paper back in her bosom, and resumed her work. By midnight she was through and left, convinced that no one had by any chance seen her interesting interlude.

She did not go home to her mother, but took a taxi to a

quiet restaurant near *Wurtemburgerplatz*. Here she was met by Henkel, her most assiduous cavalier. She found occasion when she thought nobody was looking to slip into his hand a bit of paper. Soon after that he put her into a taxi, and himself got into another.

He left it several blocks from his destination. He had alighted in a sparsely settled semi-suburban section of Berlin and the night was far advanced. The man saw not a soul. Nevertheless he kept a sharp lookout and as he turned the corner he whisked about sharply as though to catch some one spying on him.

But he seemed satisfied that his suspicions had no ground, and when he turned into a bleak little garden near the railroad track he looked no more behind him. At the door of the house at the far end of the garden, however, he did take the precaution of giving a low cough, plainly a signal.

But when a moment later the front door opened and a man let him in, without showing any light, the visitor dismissed from his mind any thought that he might have been followed in spite of his precautions.

Deep into the night the two men sat consulting over the slip of paper Anna Kurtz had handed Henkel, planning. Then at dawn both men turned in and slept.

Several nights later a furtive little man entered a *Nacht-lokal*, or night club where the police were little welcome. In fact, one had to be well known by the proprietor to get past the several locked doors that led into the resort.

The furtive little man was known to the proprietor as an expert on locks of all kinds, especially such as money changers put on their doors and strong boxes. He had only the month before left a prolonged stay with the State, a stay much against his will, for exercising his skill on a money changer's strong box several years before. The little man's current name was Schmidt.

Schmidt was a bit nervous because some of his friends told him that some one had been inquiring as to his whereabouts in the last few days. Now Schmidt had departed from the custody of the State with the State's full knowledge and consent, his term being up. But it made him nervous anyway, to hear that some one was asking about him.

So he felt the need of relaxation. This *lokal*, as he knew, was safe from the police, and he looked there for a breath of respite.

He breathed more freely when the many doors he had nego-

tiated were closed and locked behind him, and he found himself in a room as yet sparsely filled with quietly talking and drinking men and women, some of whom he knew slightly. He was a recluse of a man, so he called for a pack of cards and ordering a stein of Kulmbacher beer, arranged the candles on his table and began a game of solitaire.

"Hello, Wehncke!" some one said.

The little man swept the cards to the floor and leaped to his feet, his hand darting to an inside coat pocket. A quiet looking stranger was regarding him friendly.

"My name isn't Wehncke!" the little man snarled, while the rest of the room looked on uneasily at the scene.

The other smiled. "Then I must have made a mistake in the name," he said genially. "But my friends Red Schultze, Hanna, the Gabbler, Chris Fulda, Peter Schnabel, and others told me to look up Carl Wehncke when I got out and he'd shake hands with me. I got out last week and been looking for you since. How are you? My name is Pfeffer."

The little man stared suspiciously at the cordial stranger. But the fact that he had been admitted here and that he had named so many close pals of his quieted his fears for the moment. He did not however take him to his bosom and trust him merely because he had named good names.

The stranger treated to drinks, chatted of harmless subjects, urged Wehncke to go on with his game of solitaire, contenting himself with looking on.

Finally, however, he suggested a two handed game of casino for small stakes. Wehncke was in the mood now for quiet recreation and consented. They played for half an hour when the proprietor of the *lokal* began closing up.

"I can't go to sleep yet," the stranger said to Wehncke. "I suggest we go to my hotel and play some more in my room. I've got some good Moselle and Tokay there and good pipe tobacco from England. What do you say?"

Wehncke was winning. The stranger seemed bent on nothing but recreation. Wehncke was fond of good wine, especially Moselle and Tokay. Indeed, it seemed providential that the stranger should name just the two wines and the tobacco Wehncke loved best. So he consented and the two took a belated taxi and rode to "Pfeffer's" hotel, where they spent the rest of the night playing cards, smoking English pipe tobacco, and sipping good Moselle and Tokay.

When morning came Wehncke had won an agreeable amount of pocket money—though nothing extraordinary—had enjoyed

the playing, the wine, and the tobacco, and left the hotel to go to his room. There he fell asleep comfortably.

But at the time he was playing cards in "Pfeffer's" room a scene was taking place in another part of Berlin which would have interested him tremendously.

On *Friedrichstrasse* is a money changer who does a thriving business in foreign currencies, particularly English pounds sterling and American dollars. The day before he had done a rushing business up to past closing time and his vault was full of English pounds and American dollars. The money changer closed the safe, saw to it that the burglar alarm was working, himself locked the doors after the employees had left, then went home.

His office was on the ground floor. Underneath the office the basement was occupied partly as a storeroom, partly as an engine room. Toward three in the morning, at just about the time Wehncke left the *lokal* to play cards in "Pfeiffer's" room, two men climbed out of a coal bin in the engine part of the basement.

They then took out of their hiding place three large satchels, two of them empty. From the third they got out a collection of tools, oddly fashioned for work no honest workingman would have recognized.

A cold chisel, for instance, had its head well padded with leather; so had the nose of a short but heavy hammer. One of the two men marked with chalk a circle in the wooden ceiling of the basement. Then the other put the sharp end of the chisel at one point in the circle of chalk and hit the padded end with the padded nose of the hammer. The sound of the blow did not reach further than a few feet.

But in the strong wood of the ceiling a circle began to eat its way upward under the assault of chisel and hammer.

After half an hour the circle was a hole. It cleverly just missed the iron beams in the floor. Yet the man would have given an onlooker a peculiar impression of working not according to his own knowledge, but after a pattern set for him by some one absent.

The wood of the floor of the money changer's office proved an easy task for the chisel and hammer, and in a few minutes both men were in the office.

One of them crawled on the floor toward the window and street door and with a tiny pocket torch searched the woodwork until he found the wires of the burglar alarm. With a short, powerful pair of telegrapher's shears he cut the wires.

Meanwhile the other opened the tool satchel and was kneeling before the money changer's sheet-iron safe. It was not a very formidable affair, but fairly typical of the safes used by money changers who, not handling nearly so much money as a bank, did not extend themselves in the matter of invincible safes.

The burglar put together several pieces of steel into what American safe crackers call a "can opener" and looks like a giant model of one. With this as a starter, he went on rapidly and skillfully to pry open the safe door.

But he too would have given an onlooker the feeling that he was working after a pattern not his own. That was all the more clear because of a peculiar little incident in his work. The door had given way apparently before he quite expected it. Nevertheless, he went on to chisel another scar or two in the lintel of the safe, even after the door had yielded, as though there were a definite touch he wanted to impress on his work.

In the safe were bundles of dollars and English pounds sterling, as well as other foreign currency. There was also German money there, but the man left this severely alone, especially as he saw on a bit of paper in the same drawer a carbon copy of a list of the serial numbers of the German money bills. The foreign currency was stuffed into the two valises.

The other man meanwhile had manipulated the front door of the office so that it appeared as though the lock had been forced open from the inside. But that done he and his confederate climbed down again through the hole in the floor they had cut, and came out of the basement into the rear courtyard. Here they climbed a tall fence, one holding the satchels while the other climbed, and issued on the street.

A taxicab had been slowly going around the block. But at the sound of a long drawn out *meow*, as by a late prowling tomcat, the taxi put on speed and came up to the doorway just as the two men stepped out of a house and into the cab.

One of the men kept looking out of the small oval glass in back of the taxi to see if they were being followed. The other kept a sharp lookout ahead. But they seemed reassured after they had ridden several blocks from the scene of their exploit.

They got out at the gate to the garden where Henkel had entered several nights before and one of the men let himself and his comrade in with a key.

One of the men disposed of the satchels and their contents in cupboards and hidden cubicles in the floor and walls. The other sat down to a telephone and called up "Pfeffer's" hotel. A sleepy night clerk answered.

"I must speak to Herr Pfeffer," the man at the telephone said to him. "I just came into Berlin and have some news of his family he will want to hear at once."

The clerk plugged the call to Pfeffer's room. Pfeffer answered in remarkably short time, as if he had been expecting the call.

"Well, she's safe!" the man at the telephone said. "How's your friend?"

"Played cards most of the night with me—as agreed. Only we two. Perfectly all right. I'm coming over."

"Don't come before nine. Want some sleep. And when you do come just use the key. Don't wake me. Good-by."

Pfeffer replaced the receiver and went back quietly to sleep. The men at the other end of the wire did the same.

It would have spoiled their sleep, however, could they have seen several men hidden in a room in the next cottage. One of them had uncovered the insulation of a telephone wire and with a portable apparatus was listening in on the telephone conversation "Pfeiffer" had just had. When the receiver had been hung up he looked up at his comrades and reported word for word what had been said.

"Then we can be absolutely sure we are right!" a portly man, evidently in command of the group, said. "In that case there is no further need for delay! Come!"

The squad of men responded as mechanically and promptly as to a military order. Taking out revolvers they shoved up the sleeves of their ulsters, and leaving the house, tramped across to the next house.

Here the leader took out his revolver and pounding on the front door of the house, called out:

"Open in the name of the law!"

At first there was silence in the house. Then a man's voice called out:

"What in God's name do you want?"

The leader of the party called up:

"Useless to play this masquerade any more. We've been on your trail every moment of the time since Anna Kurtz stole the card of Hannus Wehncke from the *Kriminal Archiv!* We've followed your 'Henkel' here. We overheard your plan to imitate Wehncke's technique in robbing the money changer

on *Friedrichstrasse*. We saw Henkel lure Wehncke to play cards with him so that he could not supply an alibi.

"We've tapped your telephone wire, and we were within a few feet of you when you cut through the floor and robbed the safe this night. Now we'll blow your brains out if you attempt to fight! Open up!"

There was fierce whispered debate inside the door. A head peered cautiously through the front window. What met that person's sight was a squad of a dozen men at the front door, all with something obviously up their sleeves. At the curb in front of the garden stood a closed motor police patrol wagon. The man darted to the back window. There another squad of ulstered men stood waiting.

Five minutes later a voice, hoarse with emotion and calamity, called down:

"We surrender!"

Half an hour later a band of what can only be described as "forgers of burglars' trade marks," were in the cells made vacant by three hitherto unhappy suspects, now released almost with apologies.

CHAPTER XVIII

A CASE WITHOUT A CLEW

GIVEN a machine that hunts criminals. Set it the task of weaving a rope wherewith to hang a man. But give it not the slightest bit of material wherewith to work, not the slenderest gossamer of a clew, nothing but its vast and complicated self, assisted by squads of mechanical men.

Captain it, however, by a few highly endowed men in charge of the machine, engineers endowed with the deadly machinelike logic of the German mind, and its genius for creation of marvelous machines. Given such a machine and nothing to work with, what could it do? Let us see.

Morenstrasse in Berlin is a residential street of well-to-do apartment homes. One of them, a ponderous seven story affair lorded the block on which it stood with its massive granite front, and housed people who belonged behind such a front—successful merchants, several bank directors, and the like.

The entrance to this house looked like the approach to a combination castle, armory, and safety vault. Two unfriendly looking lions of granite flanked the steps up to the front doors, which were ponderous affairs of carved oak, never by chance negligently open, not even unlocked. To enter the house, if you were a visitor, you had to press a button on the side of the door, a button, by the way, that looked like the knob of a rosette, exactly like the other rosettes that studded the side of the door.

So that if you did not know which of these knobs sounded the bell, you had to go around to the servants' entrance, where, before you were admitted, you had to pass the scrutiny of the janitor's family peering out from behind barred windows. It was not fear of the police, you may be sure, that made the house so cautious in admitting the world.

For its tenants were of the ultraspectable world, whom the police protect from those who prey on the well-to-do. No, this caution and exclusiveness was the expression of the same fear that makes banks put bars on its windows, guards at its entrances and patent locks on its doors.

Even if you knew which rosette knob pressed the bell you had to wait till a ponderous clicking opened the outer door by invisible hands. Then you stepped into a marble entrance hall and were confronted by a burly man in gray uniform who waited for you to state your errand.

This man, a former regimental blacksmith, or his colleague, who replaced him the other twelve hours of duty, then relayed your errand or name by telephone to the person you came to see. If upstairs sent down word that it was all right to admit you, the former blacksmith escorted you to the glass-walled electric elevator, where the runner of the cage took you up to the floor announced to him by the guard at the door.

Arrived at that floor the elevator runner, following strict instructions, escorted you to the door of your visit and waited till he heard your name taken in to the host of the house and also heard the host consent to receive the caller. Only then did the elevator runner go back to his cage. This was the practice every minute of the twenty-four hours of the day.

Among the tenants in that residential vault was a Dr. Kernstoff, a gem expert for one of the biggest jewelry houses in Germany. He was a bachelor and lived in a seven-room apartment alone. But a valet and a cook came every morning to attend to him and left only late at night when Dr. Kernstoff himself saw them out of the house. Then he would lock the only door to the apartment, shoot home two bolts on the massive oak door, reënforce this with a chain lock, and go to bed.

One morning the servants came as usual at the accustomed hour and rang the bell. There was no answer. The servants rang again and again until there was no doubt that the Herr Doctor was either out or so deep in sleep that even the loud bell they could hear through the oaken door could not wake him. But were he out, both elevator runner and the guard downstairs would have told them so and would have admitted them—for the valet and the cook had reputations for unswerving honesty.

When they had been ringing for a quarter of an hour, the valet went downstairs and called up the apartment on the telephone. That bell rang, as he knew, at the master's bedside and had an insistent ring that would wake any but the dead. But since the Herr Doctor still did not answer, could he be anything but dead?

The servants then telephoned Dr. Kernstoff's place of business. No, he had not arrived, they were informed, and were sternly asked in turn what was keeping the Herr Doctor? The servants, by now thoroughly alarmed, told the senior partner of the jewelry house, who had taken up the receiver, that without doubt something was the matter. Would the Herr Senior Partner kindly advise them what to do?

The Herr Senior Partner not only told them what to do, but did it himself. He called up a friend of his, one of the engineers of the Berlin police machine, and consulted with him.

"The apartment must be entered!" said the police official when he heard the details. "I'll send some of my men to do it."

A skilled mechanic from the police department was sent to open the door without breaking it open, if possible. He managed to unlock everything that skeleton keys could open. But there were the bars and chain locks on the inside to deal with. They were all shot home as usual when the Herr Doctor retired.

There was no other entrance into the apartment—except the windows. But as there was no balcony or fire escapes to the apartment—Berlin apartment houses rarely have them—and as the roof was three stories above the apartment and the street four stories below, the only possible way the Herr Doctor could have left would be to lower himself with a rope or to jump out. So after consultation with his chiefs at police headquarters, the mechanic broke down the oak door to the apartment.

One glance into the living room and pandemonium broke loose. Dr. Kernstoff had been murdered! Clad in his night-gown he lay face down on the rug in the living room, and blood was on the rug where his head rested. He had been killed by a blow on his forehead with some blunt instrument that broke flesh and bone with a single stroke. The weapon that caused the death was gone.

And the one who dealt the blow, how had he entered the apartment? More mysterious still, how did he leave it? For the inside bars and chain locks, when the door was broken down, were found still shot home.

Obviously the murderer could not have left the apartment by the door and then slid the bolts and locks home again on the inside of the door. And the windows were closed, though not locked on the latch. For not even the tenants of that

closely guarded house bothered locking windows four stories from the street and three below the roof.

Here, then, was a murder; and there was the machine in *Alexanderplatz* with its vast catalogue of twenty million cards, with its *Meldwesen* and its *Razzia* and its squads of mechanical men ready and eager to begin weaving the rope that would hang the murderer.

The machine demanded, "Under what category number does the mode of entry come?" And the answer was, "We don't know how the entry was made. The bars and locks on the inside of the door were still fastened. The chimney would hardly admit a cat. The windows were not locked, it is true.

"But the dust on their sills had not been disturbed, as we found on examination. One might, of course, have descended from the roof by means of a rope and entered by way of the windows. But the trapdoor leading to the roof is wired for burglar alarms and is still untouched.

"Some one could conceivably have hidden himself in the apartment during the day. But the servants had given the house their bi-weekly thorough cleaning yesterday afternoon late and would have come across any one hiding there. The question remained unanswered, how did the murderer get out?"

"Finger-prints!" clamored the machine. "Not a one," was the report from the experts.

"Then give me the names of all servants, house attendants, intimate friends of the doctor, his business associates, employees at his place of business, the names of every one he visited in the last few days, of every one who had visited him, even that of the policeman on beat. I must have something to start working with!" protested the machine.

So they fed it scores and scores of names. The main part of the machine, the *Meldwesen*, the card catalogue it takes one hundred and eighty rooms to house, ground out a vast deal of information on the scores of names. But when it got through working on the grist, it was found that nothing came of that. Like attracts like and the ultra respectable Herr Doctor saw no one, had nothing to do with any one on whose record the *Meldwesen* could find the slightest flaw of irrepectability.

"What motive for the murder?" insisted the machine.

"We don't know," replied the experts. "Not a precious stone had been taken from the doctor's safe. Not a pfennig. Not a document touched. For the doctor, a methodical

man, had a complete inventory of everything and everything checks up present. He had not an enemy we can learn of.

"In short, we have not a single clew as to the why or the how of the murder, or of the escape. Suicide is out of the question. The rug where the body was found shows that a violent struggle had taken place. The skull was smashed in by a blunt instrument. There has been found no such instrument. *Not a single clew!*"

Here is where merely human brains would have said, "Then there is nothing to be done in the case!"

But the man-hunting machine of the Berlin police said:

"Very well, then at least this one thing is clear. *There is not a single clew.* Then we shall start with this clew—that there is none!"

Whereupon the deadly machinelike German logic went to work on the case. "Since there are no clews it means that whoever killed Dr. Kernstoff was skilled in removing or avoiding clews. Only a skilled criminal, familiar with the technique of removing clews, would have made such a clean job of it. But not even such a man acquires his skill all at once.

"Therefore the man must have committed similar crimes before, or parts of such crimes, such as his amazingly mysterious mode of entry and exit. If so, he must be on record somewhere; or if he has been too skillful for the police to get him his crimes were surely reported. Dr. Schneikert, your *Kriminal Archiv* clipping collection had better get to work!"

Dr. Hans Schneikert, one of the world's greatest authorities on handwriting and the man who devised the famous clipping bureau in connection with the *Kriminal Archiv* of the Berlin police, thereupon touched a button and part of the big machine began to work.

Part of the machine is a collection of newspaper clippings from every part of Germany and even from newspapers abroad. In every one of them some crime is reported and described. Every crime and clipping is catalogued and indexed, so that word is all that is needed to set mechanical men searching in that remarkable record. What Dr. Schneikert looked for came under these headings:

Burglaries committed, with doors found locked on inside. Burglaries committed, with no clews left behind. Murders unmotivated. Murders unmotivated, with blunt weapon on head.

—and several other similar subheads.

A diligent search finally narrowed Dr. Schneikert's interest to a clipping from a Darmstadt newspaper telling of a burglary committed in a strongly guarded apartment house. Entry had been made by means of a painter's scaffold, which had been put up that day and had remained overnight on the level of the roof. But the burglars had left no clew otherwise; no finger-prints, no foot-prints, no marks of any kind.

"Nothing, at least, that the police of a small town could discover!" decided the chiefs of the Berlin detective system. "Therefore, although this was committed three weeks ago, we shall send down *our* men to see if *we* can find any clews."

So a commission of experts went to Darmstadt to look into the three-weeks-old burglary. They found the mystery there was even greater than the Darmstadt police found it. For the Berlin detectives—not the mechanical rank and file detectives, but their expert heads—found that entry was *not* made by means of the painter's ladder primarily.

Whoever could have got access to the roof by *means of the stairs* could just as easily have entered the apartment by a rear balcony. Therefore some one must have got to the roof by some way other than the stairs. But as the roof was isolated from other buildings how *did* the burglars get up to the roof to use the painter's scaffold?

An examination of a chimney at the corner of the house and on the street front showed two of the corners frayed as by a rope. The painters had not used that chimney to anchor their scaffold. The only other way to get up on that roof would be to throw a rope up from the street—a prodigious feat to do with a rope heavy enough to support the weight of a man. But could it not be got up there some other way?

Yes, reasoned the Berlin detectives, if first a stone were tied to a long, light string, then so thrown that it would strike the steeply sloping roof behind the chimney and rolling down on the other side would drop over the edge of the roof and be let down. Then a sufficiently strong rope could be tied to the string and hauled up to the roof, around the chimney and so down again until some one on the ground held the two ends of a strong rope in his hands. To test their theory the Berlin detectives did just that thing, and one of them climbed by means of the rope up to the house.

It was then found that once on the roof with such a rope as aid, there was no need of the painter's scaffold. Therefore either the theory was wrong and no such rope had been used—or the painter's scaffold was only a blind. Investigation with

this point in view showed that the latter theory was correct. The burglar had climbed the side of the house.

Word was flashed back to Berlin to look on the Kernstoff apartment house roof for such signs as might indicate that a similar device had been used there, too. Yes, the word came back, the chimney at one end of the roof bore such marks of rope.

Whereupon the theory was tested in the same way as in Darmstadt. A string was obtained, long enough to reach from the ground, around the chimney, on the roof, and down to the street again. A small stone was tied to one end. It was thrown up to the roof, landed on the sloping roof behind the chimney, rolled down the slope and around the other side of the chimney and so down to the street. Tying a rope to the string it was drawn up, around the chimney and down again. Then a detective climbed up the side of the house by the rope.

Once on the roof, however, it developed that a man would have a hard job to get to Dr. Kernstoff's window unless he could literally walk along the face of the house like a fly. So they went to work to find out how a man, hanging by a rope from the roof could yet "walk" along the face of a house.

They concluded finally that it could be done, if the climber, suspended by a rope, wore some such spur arrangement on his feet as workers on telegraph poles use when they climb wooden poles. On further examination, it was found that in the granite face of the house were scars such as might have been made by a sharp steel spur.

Dr. Schneikert then went over his collection of newspaper clippings again for burglaries that would indicate such a technique. He found a few worth looking into. From these, there began to emerge the shadowy theoretical figure of a burglar who had devised a technique of his own; who was used to working high in the air; who probably got his idea from some previous occupation.

"Previous occupation involving work in the air, such as that of a house painter, steeple jack, iron worker and the like," were now put into the maw of the big *Meldwesen* machine. Through the *Kriminal Archiv*, too, burrowed many spectacled, mechanical men, searching and searching in the records of a list of burglars for one who, in a more respectable past, had a previous occupation involving work up in the air, *et cetera*.

A dozen such were found, men who had been convicted as burglars and who had been house painters or iron workers. One was found who had been a steeple jack. Then began the

process of winnowing the list. Two were dead; three in prison; five were at liberty.

On the five centered the hunt. Two were at once located, one in Hamburg, another in Essen. They were rounded up, examined, and found armed with perfect alibis. Three remained to be hunted down.

On the card of every one in the *Meldwesen* are names of relatives, friends, business associates; on the cards of those convicted of crime are names of accomplices, sweethearts and enemies of the person recorded on the card. Each of these names in turn has a card in the *Meldwesen* with information reaching out in different directions.

The whole catalogue can be likened to a series of webs, like a spider's, with each web a complete pattern of its own, but with each thread leading to another web, until the whole covers a vast area. The only difference between the *Meldwesen* and such a system of spiders' webs is that there is strength in the threads that bind the *Meldwesen* scheme—strength enough to make a rope wherewith to hang a man.

The *Meldwesen* was weaving such a strand now with new material that had been given it. It was now piercing together from its card catalogue the record of an individual, which was checking up nicely with the theories of what few findings they had.

"Johann Gutkind," it was saying, "alias Christopher Mannheim, alias several other names; nicknamed by his accomplices the 'Horse Fly'; twenty-nine years old; formerly employed as layer of roof tiles; later worked as steeple jack; served two years for burglary committed in Hamburg; mode of entry through window on third story of apartment house. He knocked householder unconscious when latter pursued him into the street; weapon, blackjack; light sentence, due to youth and first offense; but reported since liberation from prison associating with notorious burglars, namely—" Here followed a list of friends.

Johann Gutkind was nominated by the *Meldwesen* and the Berlin police, therefore, for further investigation. His whereabouts were unknown; for the reprehensible young man had not reported to the police his recent changes of address. He was already subject to arrest and punishment for this omission, irrespective of the Kernstoff murder.

Every name on Johann's card was taken out for further study and the individuals themselves placed under surveillance. A great deal of this work came to nothing. But on

Gutkind's card appeared the name of a suspected receiver of stolen goods. This fence had an eighteen-year-old son, Fritz, whose name also appeared on the cards of several of Gutkind's associates.

On Fritz's own *Meldwesen* card it appeared that the worst thing in the youth's record was that he had been used as a sort of innocent errand boy in several burglaries and in the consequent disposition of stolen goods.

It was brought out in each case that the boy, while he may have had a suspicion of the character of some of the men for whom he performed services, he was really ignorant of the exact nature of each errand, and was therefore not liable to punishment as an accomplice. It would appear that the criminals employing him deliberately kept him from actual participation in crime so that he could continue to remain at large and be of service to them.

In investigating this youth it was found that at the time of the Kernstoff murder, he was employed by a large grocer as delivery boy. He had at his disposal a closed wagonette, propelled by himself seated on a tricycle arrangement on which the wagonette was mounted.

In following up the theory of a human fly climbing up the side of the Kernstoff house, the detective came up against this difficulty. A man cannot easily promenade about a city in the small hours of the night with coils of stout rope, without being seen by a policeman and hustled off to the station for examination.

And the policeman on the Kernstoff beat on the night of the murder was a man with a record for keeping his eyes open. He had seen no one carrying coils of rope that night. If he had, he would have stopped him.

But now the wagonette on the tricycle furnished the police machine a new line of inquiry. The policeman on the Kernstoff beat was asked if he had seen such a wagonette. The policeman racked his memory and consulted his memorandum book in which Berlin policemen, according to strict regulations, keep a detailed account of everything on their beat that departs in the least from routine occurrence.

Suddenly memory furnished what had been too insignificant for the policeman to enter in his memorandum. At about three o'clock of the morning of the murder, a tricycle wagonette, propelled by a young fellow, went through that street. The policeman, under general instructions, stopped him and made him identify himself.

The youth produced identification papers in good order and proved that he was a grocer's clerk. He also told the policeman that a cousin of his had a christening that night; and the grocer's clerk had arranged with his employer to be allowed to use the tricycle wagonette wherein to deliver the extra table linens, dishes, and cutlery that had been hired for the occasion.

The youth had stayed till the party broke up, he said, and was now taking these things back to his home to save himself an extra trip next day. From his home he would return the things in the morning to the place whence they had been rented.

The policeman threw open the lid of the wagonette and found a lot of tumbled table linen on top. He did not dig deeper into the contents, but from a police box telephoned the grocer for whom the youth worked. From him he got confirmation of the boy's story. So the policeman let him go with his wagonette.

The detective machine did not quiz the youth. The possibilities were that he would betray more if he did not know he was being watched. He was discharging his duties as errand boy to the grocer apparently in good faith. But he was living with a degree of comfort rather beyond an errand boy's wages. Every step the boy made was followed.

It was thus found that he frequented a small *wein stube* or a kind of saloon near the police headquarters in *Alexanderplatz*. It had small windows giving on the street and looked not in the least attractive, though, neither did it look forbidding.

Its frequenters were studied and it was found that several pickpockets and strong-arm holdup men came there occasionally. The youth would come there, drink a glass of Rhine wine, chat with one or two men quietly, go into a back room for what looked like a conference with somebody; then come out and go home.

When this had been going on for some time, the detectives sent a stool pigeon, a trusted sneak of the underworld, to pretend drunkenness and blunder into that back room a few moments immediately after the youth had entered it one evening. As the supposed drunk put his hand on the knob, the owner of the wine house called out:

"Where in hell are you going?"

But the man had already opened the door. To his astonishment he found the room empty. And there was no other door or window there to tell whither the youth had vanished.

By then the proprietor had seized the man by the collar and hurled him back.

"You keep out of this place unless you want your neck broken!" he said furiously.

Half an hour later the youth came out again and went home.

That night several of the mechanical men of the Berlin police machine jimmied their way into the *wein stube* and noiselessly explored the room where the youth had vanished so mysteriously. As the stool pigeon had reported, there was but one door to the room, the one by which the mechanical men now stole in; and no other outlet, not even a window. With pocket flashes lighting their silent search, the defectives explored every inch of the room.

An hour spent thus brought no results. There was but one way left to conduct such a search—to tap and knock at every bit of floor and wall, which would of course alarm every one in the house. But there was no alternative.

One of the mechanical men went outside again and summoned the reserves waiting for word from them. A dozen detectives headed by a superior officer tramped into the *wein stube*, shouted for the landlord to appear and proceeded to explore the mysterious room, with all the noise in the world.

Pounding on the floor soon yielded for the detectives a hollow sound in the neighborhood of a chest of drawers standing on a bit of carpet. This was moved aside and a trapdoor discovered.

"Who's down there?" demanded the head of the police squad, of the landlord.

The man refused to speak. The trapdoor was raised by one of the mechanical men, while the others stood with revolvers cocked. No sound came from the dark cave. A ladder must have been the means of descending to it, for there were no stairs; nor was there any ladder visible.

Meanwhile the young grocer's clerk was brought to the scene.

"Who is down there?" he was asked.

He was beside himself with fear. "He will kill me if I tell. Or any of his friends will do it, if he doesn't! I'll go to jail first!"

He refused to say another word. The police finally decided there was nothing left but a frontal attack. A ladder was brought. The officer in charge of the attack shouted an order for his men to descend. He himself led them.

From below there came no sound. But suddenly the leader

of the attacking party, a veteran of the great war, yelled to his men:

“Back! Upstairs!”

His men scrambled for the ladder, even before he had shouted. They were yelling, gasping, retching. Out of the well of darkness they tumbled one by one, contorted and choking. Those waiting outside were astounded.

“Gas! Chlorine!” the leader of the party gasped.

Then those who had been through the war fled outdoors. For the familiar, dreaded fumes of chlorine came out of the pit.

In the street was enacted a scene like a tiny corner of a battlefield in the early part of the great war. Several men were writhing with deadly nausea. Others were trying to administer first aid.

Meanwhile from a patrol box telephone went calls. They brought ambulances and a motor police patrol. From it poured another two squads of mechanical men. But these had gas masks with them. And from the patrol wagon they brought pickaxes and hatchets.

Donning masks, one squad began chopping open the floor above the hiding place. The other squad, also protected with masks, stood ready to shoot.

When half the floor was torn up, powerful electric torches were lowered to the cellar. When this brought no volley of revolver fire, at a motioned signal from the leader of the attacking party, six men, wearing gas masks, leaped down into the cellar ready for the fight of their lives.

But all that met their sight was a huddled figure on the floor, writhing in agony with a gas mask over his head. The man was seized and rushed through the opening in the floor.

In the fresh air, the mask was taken off the man's head. It was Johann Gutkind, the man the police were hunting in connection with the Kernstoff murder. He had prepared the gas defense; and a defect in the mask he depended upon betrayed him to death. For he died shortly after.

Before his death he confessed that he had used the grocer's clerk as a partly innocent accomplice in an attempt to rob Dr. Kernstoff. The wagonette held a long rope concealed under the soiled linen the policeman saw in his careless inspection. Gutkind's method of entry was exactly what the police had deduced it was—by means of rope and a pair of steel spurs.

He opened Dr. Kernstoff's window and stepped across the

sill without touching it, so as not to disturb the dust he knew theoretically was there. He was gloved, so he left no fingerprints.

He had barely entered the living room, however, when Dr. Kernstoff leaped upon him. In the struggle Gutkind crashed in the man's skull with his blackjack. But he was so frightened at having killed a man—his first and only murder—that he decided to take no loot with him that might furnish the police with the remotest clew. But in the crime museum in the great police headquarters on *Alexanderplatz* I saw the rope and spurs he had used—mute trophies of the battle between an original criminal and a German built impersonal, criminal-hunting machine.

CHAPTER XIX

MAKING THE KNIFE TALK

WHEN you think of Vienna you think of Strauss waltzes, delicious little breakfast rolls, cafés gay with music, sweet girls and artists. You think of everything but the ruthless bloodhounds, police, who follow a scent where apparently there is none, who track the slayer to his den, who shoot it out with him when cornered.

For the Viennese are pretty much as the world conceives them—pleasure-loving, charming, soft-hearted, easy-going folk; not the caliber that makes a famous police. They have not the genius for teamwork that makes Scotland Yard a household word; they have not that brilliant individual initiative that makes French police annals as fascinating as good fiction; they have not the regimentalized efficiency, the genius for machinery that make man-hunting so mechanical a pursuit in Germany and so dreaded by the criminal.

Something of their German brothers' talent for keeping elaborate records the Viennese have; and the *Kriminal Archiv* of Vienna is almost as complete as the world famous *Meldwesen* of the Berlin police. But of the qualities that make efficient sleuths the rank and file of the Vienna police have natively little.

And yet the record of Vienna for solving crime and apprehending the criminal when only the slenderest of clues exist ranks as high as that of any police in the world. What is the answer?

The answer lies in university laboratories. When the Vienna police are stumped with a mystery presented by crime they waste little time with their own detectives. They take up the telephone, call up a university professor or scientist and put him on the trail.

For in Vienna—which to-day means all Austria, since the country is mostly head and little body, mostly capital and little province—all the detective talent is almost monopolized by the men who have spent their lives in universities and in laboratories, as delvers in books and searchers with microscopes, chemical reagents, spectrums, and what-not.

But let me tell it with an actual case.

Vienna used to be as gay and charming as Paris and night made the city a place of all play and no work. The war has sobered the city somewhat, but gradually the old Viennese gayety and stir are coming back to its night life.

One dawn not so long ago a Viennese policeman turned the corner of a street into the *Ringstrasse*, that girdle of boulevards that makes Vienna's main thoroughfare. On the sidewalk against the granite wall surrounding a former palace he saw a crumpled figure dressed in opera cape and evening garb. The high silk hat was lying a few feet away from the man's head, which was almost hidden by his cape.

"A gay bird too drunk to find his nest!" the policeman mused as he walked toward him.

But at a few feet from the motionless figure the policeman changed his mind about the gayety of the bird. For there was a pool of something dark on the sidewalk about the head; and the weather did not account for it. Bending over, the policeman drew back the opera cloak that hid the face.

Then carefully he replaced the opera cloak and blew his police whistle. A fellow officer appeared on the run soon after and a few words sent the newcomer to the nearest telephone.

In a commendably short time an automobile slid up to the place where the policeman was guarding the body. From it issued briskly several superior officers of the Vienna detective force. One of them knelt by the side of the body and uncovered the head.

He recognized the face at once, Count von Crovitz, a well-to-do *boulevardier*, one of the most familiar figures in Vienna's café life. In the jugular vein in his throat stuck a thin gold penknife. The pockets had been rifled.

With a pair of fine-pointed pliers brought along by one of the detective officials—thanks to the competent report by the policeman over the telephone—the penknife was removed carefully lest finger-prints be marred.

For the penknife proved to be the only clew to the slayer, though the motive, robbery, was plain enough.

At the laboratory of the Vienna police headquarters—they maintain one of their own—the finger-prints found were so smeared up with blood that they proved almost worthless.

Almost, I say, for there were some shreds of print; but so minute were the clear parts that as a basis for search they were worth nothing. Nevertheless, what there was of them was photographed for future use.

But the knife itself was of such fine workmanship that it pointed either to an owner of means and taste or to a thief who had stolen it from such an owner. In tiny letters on it was stamped, "Made in Paris," and there were engraved initials on it, "A. W."

At once a staff of clerks dug into the city directories and the many and minute records at police headquarters, records that have something of Berlin's *Meldwesen* and of Scotland Yard's "Criminal Registry" in their scope and efficiency.

All the "A. W.'s" in the city were looked up and their records studied. Any "A. W." who had a criminal past thereupon found himself minutely questioned. But they all had more or less convincing alibis.

The investigators were having a hard enough time of it when there came the news of the success of the search—a success that wrecked that line of investigation. The owner of the penknife was found.

He was a clubman, Arthur Weissman. He came to police headquarters and proved that burglars had entered his bachelor quarters three weeks before and had gone off with some loot, among which was the gold penknife found stuck in Count von Crovitz's throat.

He had reported the robbery and there in the entry made by the police themselves was the knife described and listed, initials and all. Arthur Weissman himself was proved to be some hundreds of miles from Vienna on the night of the murder.

Then it was that the detective heads decided this was a matter for better heads than theirs. They were not particularly distressed at this; for better heads were at their disposal.

The chief of the detective service merely took up a telephone and called up one of the assistant professors of the department of criminology of a near-by university. To him he communicated the few facts the police had in the case.

"Where have you got the penknife now?" asked the scientist.

"In the drawer of my desk."

"Take a newly washed linen handkerchief and wipe that drawer with it. Then wrap the penknife in a bit of oiled paper, the handkerchief in another and send them both up here."

The detective head did as he was told.

When the knife and the handkerchief arrived at the laboratory of the scientist he first took out the handkerchief. On

its otherwise fresh white were sharp smears of dust that came from wiping the bureau drawer.

Some of this dust the scientist got on to a moistened microscope slide by flipping the handkerchief with his finger nail, so that the flying particles adhered to the moisture on the slide. Studying this under the microscope lens the scientist noted down the nature of the dust particles.

What he found thus was to be used as a negative factor—all such dust would be disregarded in the investigation thereafter, as coming only from the bureau drawer at police headquarters.

Then with a very fine screw driver and pliers the scientist carefully took the penknife apart. No Swiss watchmaker could have worked with greater delicacy than that scientist unscrewing the tiny threaded bits of steel that held the blades of the penknife.

He worked with a sheet of white paper under the knife, the surface of the paper oiled and fine to offer no pores down which the dust could hide.

As with all penknives that have been carried about in one's pockets, dust showed on all parts that did not rub against something. There was dust in the grooves into which the blades closed; dust in the hinges of the blades; dust of the finest had filtered even between the tightly screwed together parts.

Then began a minute analysis under the powerful microscope, and with chemical reagents and comparisons with photographs of other dust particles made through microscope lenses, a collection of which the police of Vienna possess.

And from this analysis a series of deductions were noted down not only by the scientist, but also by colleagues from other departments called in by him.

What helped the analysis was the ascertained fact that the penknife had been manufactured only a day before it was stolen. That meant that little of the dust found on the various parts of the knife was accumulated in the pockets of the original owner.

First was examined the dust found between the tightly pressed plates of the sides and under the screw heads of the knife. To get into these places the dust had to be minute, indeed, the breakdown siftage of the coarser dust of the pockets in which the knife was carried.

"Fine!" exclaimed the man with his eye to the barrel of the microscope. "Either the man had the lining of his coat

pocket torn or he wore a coat which had no lining to his pockets. I hope it's the latter."

"How do you deduce that?" asked the Vienna detective, who was watching the analysis.

"Why, the oldest dust, the dust that has been broken up so fine by constant friction and deterioration that it has sifted in between the plates of the knife consists mostly of minute particles of wool. That would be from the pocket where the knife was most carried.

"If the man had carried the knife in his trousers pocket, which is always lined, the particles would be of cotton, since that is what pocket lining is made of with infrequent exception.

"But since what we have here is dust of wool it means that the pocket was in the coat; and that either, as I said, the pocket lining was torn and the knife had slipped through to the bottom of the coat next to the wool itself—or the pocket was unlined.

"Let us see—no, there are no particles of cotton there at all. I should say then that the pocket was of the 'patch variety.' But 'patch' pockets are made only in sporting suits of what is known as the 'Norfolk' style, with belt in back.

"Now, let us look again at the wool particles. There seems to be roughly about fifty per cent black particles, fifty white. That would say to me the coat was either black and white checkered or what is known as a 'pepper-and-salt.'"

He addressed the detective: "Will you have your men go to the class of tailors that make or sell this type of Norfolk suits and bring a collection of wool samples of black and white mixtures?"

A telephone call to police headquarters started that search. By next morning a collection such as he had asked for was at the scientist's disposal.

From each sample he obtained wool particles and compared them with the findings of the day before. Finally he smiled.

"Here is the exact pattern," he said, pointing to a cut of English tweed of the pepper-and-salt variety. "Our man then often wore a Norfolk suit of this pattern, comparatively new as the particles under the microscope show."

"Of course!" the detective exclaimed. "I remember now that in the list of articles stolen from Arthur Weissman at the time he lost this knife was just such a suit."

"Then we know that the man who killed Count van Crovitz was not the man who looted Arthur Weissman's place, but was

probably closely allied to some one who committed the burglary and from whom he got both the suit and the penknife."

"How do you deduce this?" asked a layman, not a detective.

"Well," replied the assistant professor in criminology, "I can't do better than to let Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Henry Smith, K. C. B., ex-Commissioner of the City of London Police, answer you."

He took a book from his shelf and read:

"Criminals, if they will pardon me for saying so, show a strange want of originality. The streets of London have thousands of pickpockets, for instance; they began as pickpockets and will continue to pick pockets.

"The omnibus thief remains an omnibus thief; and the stealer of milk cans steals milk cans and nothing else. The stealer of dogs might surely diversify his program by occasionally stealing a cat; but, no, the felines concern him not. With strange stupidity they frequent the same lines of omnibuses, return to the same streets and until Nemesis overtakes them, steal the same articles.

"In the higher walks of the profession these peculiarities are still more striking. The bank robber and the forger are fascinated by their own style of business.

"The ruffian who robs with violence uniformly knocks his victims down as the slaughterer poles an ox; whereas the good old 'stand-and-deliver' would in the vast majority of cases be quite sufficient and risk a much less severe sentence.

"That is why," resumed the professor, "I am fairly certain one man committed the burglary and another man murdered and robbed Count von Crovitz on a main thoroughfare. But they undoubtedly are pals."

"Which reminds me," said the Vienna police department official, "the murderer is probably a foreigner, perhaps an Italian. We looked in our records under the category of hold-up men who killed, particularly those who used the knife.

"We found no one whose mode of attack was like his. And the violence of it and the skill with which the man found the jugular vein points to an old ferocious hand at crime."

"Then after him!" the scientist replied. "We know how he was dressed part of the time; at any rate in what sort of clothes he carried the stolen penknife. It might be profitable to look again into the Weissman burglary."

"It shall be done," said the police official.

"All right, then let's get back to our dust. Next in quantity and fineness to the wool particles we find in the penknife the dust of a derivative of cocaine. The man was either a vender or a user of drugs. And the state of decomposition of this

dust would time the oldest deposit of it as about three months back."

The Vienna detective official was making a note.

"Investigate among drug venders known to us for reports of customer of foreign origin wearing a pepper-and-salt Norfolk coat," he wrote. "What else have you found, professor?"

The latter looked at his notes.

"I know he smokes a pipe because the tobacco dust is of the 'Warship' brand. An English pipe tobacco. I've analyzed that dust before."

The detective made a note.

"I should say," continued the professor, "that the man who carried the knife is either English or had cultivated a rather pronounced English taste. This combination of Norfolk jacket and pipe smoking would point to one who lived in England.

"And here comes another clew if I'm not mistaken," the scientist said as an assistant entered the room with a report of a quantitative analysis made in the chemistry laboratory. He glanced at the report.

"Yes, it's as I thought. I found among the dust in the knife some sugar dust mixed with another substance, which on analysis turns out to be chicle, or the substance from which chewing gum is made.

"There is quite a lot of it present, so that chewing gum must have made a rather constant part of the contents of the pocket in that Norfolk coat. A restless individual, I should judge, always either smoking or using heroin or chewing gum.

"Look for a high-strung type who has perhaps been in America, long enough at any rate to acquire a taste for chewing gum. For the habit has not as yet made any progress in Europe."

The detective official entered all these speculations in his notebook. He knew that the scientist's "perhaps" was as good as another man's positive assertion.

"Why do you suppose the murderer left the knife behind?" asked the layman.

"Perhaps in the hope that it would throw us off the track with its initials."

"Now let me sum up what you have found, professor," said the detective official.

"What you have found out from the dust in the knife is that he undoubtedly carried the knife for some months in his coat pocket; that the coat was of the 'pepper-and-salt' pattern and of the style known as 'Norfolk'; that he uses or did use

the drug heroin; that the coat had been stolen from Mr. Arthur Weissman at the time the gold penknife was stolen; that it was probably an accomplice or friend of his who committed the burglary and gave him the coat and the penknife; that the murderer or whoever carried the knife about the three months smokes or smoked an English pipe tobacco of the 'Warship' brand; that he also chewed gum; that he was probably at some time in England and perhaps in America; that his predilection seems to be for English dress and tobacco; that he is perhaps of a nervous temperament.

"We ourselves deduce from our records that the man is probably a foreigner and an old hand at this peculiar murder technique of stabbing in the jugular vein. I think we have something to work with."

The detective official returned to police headquarters and ordered a reopening of the investigation of the Weissman burglary, which, because of the comparatively small haul taken, had been more or less neglected.

This time the police went over the ground minutely. The entry had been made through the basement window in the rear of the house. There were strong iron bars in the windows but the burglar had worked on them with a technique of his own.

He seemed to have used a small automobile jack, such as is used in raising a car to aid the removal of a tire. Only instead of using it for up and down work the burglar had placed the base of the jack against the side of the wall, the other against the nearest bar and then pumped the handle of the jack.

That pried the bar out by its roots and made entry easy. The police had looked up in Vienna records for a similar technique but found none.

On going over the ground of the burglary after the Von Crovitz murder, however, the police found something they had not seen the first time. In a dusty corner under the window where the entry was made they found a cloth-covered button, evidently torn off by accident, for a bit of the cloth of the coat still clung to the thread.

On the reverse side of the button was stamped the name of the manufacturer of the button and the word, "Berlin."

A member of the Vienna detective force was dispatched to Berlin, after an investigation in Vienna showed that no tailor handled buttons of that particular make. In Berlin the tailor who made the coat from which the button had come off was found.

He had made to order some twenty suits with those buttons and his records of the customers for whom these suits were made yielded, after elimination, some half a dozen possibilities.

Meanwhile, at Berlin police headquarters, a search was being made in their famous catalogue, the *Meldwesen* and their *Kriminal Archiv* for a burglar or burglars who used an automobile jack or something like it in forcing entry into houses.

Two cases of the kind were found, one eliminated by the presence of the burglar in Hamburg prison. The other case recorded, "Principals escaped. Known to be two brothers, probably foreigners.

"Description of one of these: Slim, about twenty-four, smooth-shaven, characteristic twitching of nostrils and upper lip observable in cocaine addicts. Seen by half-stunned watchman who had been blackjacked by the burglars."

The Berlin tailor now remembered a customer answering to such a description, one for whom he had made a suit with such buttons as those under investigation. His order book gave the name of Victor Rizzi and a hotel.

Here was obtained a description of the second brother, for the two had lived there three and a half months before. The other was the elder, about thirty-five, lean, nervous, with a mustache clipped in British military style.

Both men spoke German excellently but with a slight Italian accent and were heard speaking English apparently without accent at all. When the brothers left the hotel they left no sign or clew to their next stop.

But the Vienna detective returned to his city with a description of two likely candidates for the missing equations in the Weisman burglary and the Von Crovitz murder.

Some days later the police made several raids on resorts which drug venders frequented. The prisoners were kept together in one cell for two days and nights. Then with only a perfunctory examination they were released.

But during their enforced sojourn some of the suspected drug venders made the acquaintance of a newcomer in Vienna, an Italian who gave his name as Manuccio. This man was more severely handled by the police than the others, at least in the presence of the other suspects.

When they were all released his hard treatment by the police won him the sympathy of the other released suspects and they befriended him. Back in their hangouts Manuccio

proved to be a likable fellow and possessed of a lot of knowledge of the technique of peddling narcotics.

He also told his friends of a trick he had practiced on a customer in Berlin whereby the proceeds of selling the heroin was a small item compared to the blackmail he was able to extort from him. He gave only half a description of the customer. But it was enough to excite the interest of one of his new-found friends, known simply as Fritz. "How did your man dress?" asked this new friend.

"English in style," Manuccio told him. "English 'Norfolk' coats, English lounging robes and so on, smoked English pipes and tobacco. Yet, he wasn't English.

"Italians, he and his brother, though they had lived in different parts of the world, living by their wits and jimmies and occasionally with something more with a sting to it than burglar's tools. Dangerous chaps, I know.

"But I wish I could get on their trail again. I know they're good for another touch by now and I know how to work it."

The other took Manuccio aside. "If I put you on their trail will you split the 'profits?'"

Manuccio, after an appearance of hesitation, assented.

"All right," said Fritz. "They're in Vienna and I keep them supplied. I am sure they're the ones you mean." He told Manuccio something of them.

"Yes, that's our meat, Fritz," Manuccio nodded. "Now I'll tell you how we will work our little affair. When you next go to see them you tell me. I'll trail behind and see if they really are our men."

That night Fritz went to a "night club" and sauntered over to a table in a corner where two stylishly dressed men sat, obviously brothers. They were expecting him and after some talk he slipped a bulky envelope over to them in return for which they slipped him some money.

He then left them. In the corridor he was joined by Manuccio who had been watching from a half hidden corner in the next room.

"They're our men, all right. Otto has clipped off his mustache. But I'd recognize that twitch of the nostrils anywhere," Manuccio said. "Now we must find out where they live. We will both lie low out here.

"You follow on foot if they walk home. I'll get a cab and be on their trail if they go home on wheels."

Manuccio departed and Fritz remained on guard in the shadow of an unoccupied sentry-box. An hour later the two

brothers emerged and hailed a cab. As they went off in it Fritz saw another cab swing into the street and roll off in the same direction.

The following day Manuccio told Fritz:

"I've found out where they live," he told Fritz. "The next step is for you to invite them out for an evening's fun while I manage to visit their apartment and do a little investigating. That's how I did it last time.

"I spent an evening in their rooms while a comrade enticed them out. Then I found out from their rooms what sort of jobs they were up to. When I know this I come to them with a proposition that is part blackmail, part offer of help in similar jobs.

"I put the proposition to them in a crowded restaurant so that they hesitated to answer me as they would do if they were alone with me. They are artists with any kind of knife, from penknife to stiletto."

"Then all I'll do is to furnish entertainment," Fritz said. "Don't expect me to do anything else."

"Don't worry. I'm taking the dangerous end of it," Manuccio assured him.

Two nights later Fritz invited the two brothers out to a party given by some of the Vienna underworld. He saw to it that by midnight they were full of wine and enjoying themselves.

Meanwhile, Manuccio with apparent ease had gained entrance into the apartment in which the two brothers lived. A bunch of skeleton keys had helped him. Once inside he went to the street window and opening it lit a cigarette.

Against the dark of the room the little action was quite visible in the street to any one who happened to be looking up at that window. It appeared that there were four or five men looking up at that particular window at various points of the block.

Quietly they converged on the house and mounting the stairs were admitted by Manuccio. Several other men remained in the street, apparently lounging.

In the rooms of the brothers, active search was going on. In a closet was found the well worn Norfolk coat of "pepper-and-salt" pattern taken in the Weissman burglary; a suit of clothing with a Berlin tailor's label and a coat button missing; several cans of an English pipe tobacco, "Warship" brand; several packets of American chewing gum; a small amount of heroin.

But most important were several articles reported as taken from the pockets of the murdered Count von Crovitz on the night of his death.

All these things were carefully done up and taken away by two of the visitors. Three others remained in the room and the light was put out.

Most of the night passed in silent waiting for the two brothers to return. It was well along toward seven o'clock with morning light showing strong that from the street sounded the singing of a bibulous individual.

The men in the apartment became keenly alert and scattered to various hiding places in the apartment. Manuccio alone remaining at the window where he kept watch of the street below.

The bibulous individual lurched his way down the block and disappeared around the corner. Almost immediately after two men turned into the street and came toward the house. They too showed signs that they had been well entertained.

But nothing about them that suggested befuddled wits. Indeed, they kept a sharp lookout as though from habit.

Turning into the apartment house they mounted the stairs and unlocked the door to their home. It was the elder of the two who first set foot in the house.

An instant later he leaped back with a yell. Something he had glimpsed—perhaps the feet of one of the hiding men—exploded things.

From their hiding places leaped four detectives, revolvers pointing, shouting stern commands to the pair to halt. The elder of the brothers took one leap into space and landed on his toes on the floor below.

The younger vaulted the railing and got there as quickly. To the turn of the stairs ran the two, while above them detectives fired down the semi-dark stairway and followed them.

Again the two brothers leaped a flight at a time. This time the younger fell in a heap with his leg crushed under him. A detective fell on him a few seconds later and a fierce struggle flared up. But the other detectives raced after the elder man who had leaped again.

And in his leap he had adroitness enough to take out a clasp knife. When he reached the street floor he saw the street door open but three men waiting for him, gun drawn. Behind him thundered down three others, firing confusedly.

The man halted an instant, laid the clasp knife in the palm

of his upturned hand, drew back, then hurled the knife at the group at the door.

It was all over before the group at the door could scatter. Deep into the shoulder of a detective sank the blade of the knife, only a few inches away from his jugular vein.

But simultaneously with him sank the man who threw the knife.

Later, it was found that three bullets found their mark in him at the moment he threw the knife, one from the front lodging between his eyes, two from behind in his lungs.

From the younger brother it was learned that it was the youth who had committed the burglary at Weissman's. But it was the elder who had followed Count von Crovitz in the latter's night life and dogged his steps when the Count was returning home alone one night unable to find a cab.

The Count on being halted started to run. But the opened penknife hurled with sure aim stopped him.

And university brains backing the Vienna police stopped the career of the knife thrower and gave his younger brother many years of reflection in prison.

CHAPTER XX

MURDER BY PIECEMEAL

SELDOM, if ever, do the police chiefs of a great city feel shocked at a crime. But they may feel pity or indignation. A policeman must start life with a certain toughness of sensibilities; or he acquires it. Otherwise he could not stand the daily contact with crime and cruelty that is largely his lot.

One morning, however, the chief of police in Vienna did get a real shock when he opened a package that came through the mail addressed to him. What came in the package was bad enough; but it would not of itself have shocked a veteran police official like himself.

For, unhappily for the human race, murder and desecration of the human body are only too common a phenomenon in the crime annals of a big city. The shock itself was due to something that was strongly implied by the sending of this package.

For, five days earlier, he had received through the mails a similar package. In each case a sheet from the most popular daily in Vienna was wrapped about a cigarette box and tied with a bit of common string. The address had been typed with a new machine, as was apparent from the clearness and cleanness of the type. But in the first package, when opened, was found the index finger of the left hand of a woman.

Thereat the police assumed that a murder had been committed and that for some reason the murderer was exhibiting evidence of the crime to the police. The package was minutely examined for clues. But three hundred thousand people read daily the newspaper which made the wrapper.

Perhaps as many people threw away such empty cigarette boxes as the one in which the finger was sent. The string was just as common a variety. The typewriting of the address, as I have said, indicated that the machine was so new that it had not yet acquired those bits of deterioration that often make typewriting as individual as handwriting.

The address on the package, "Chief of Police, Vienna," cer-

tainly offered no clew. The postmark showed that the little package had been mailed at a letter box on the busiest corner in Vienna. The police had nothing, therefore, wherewith to work.

And now, five days later, came the second package, the one that shocked the chief of police. Wrapper, box, string, and typing of the address were practically the same as on the first package. But the finger this time that came in the box was the third of the right hand; again a woman's; undoubtedly the same woman; and this time there was a plain gold marriage ring on the finger.

But what shocked the chief of police was that after examination it was clear that the victim must have been alive four days after the first finger had been cut off; and was alive only the day before the second one was sent. Suppose she was still alive and more such packages should come!

What a picture! Somewhere a fiend was carving by bits a living human being, a woman! With the desperation of human beings working to save another human being from horror worse than death, the Vienna police chiefs bent all their energies on a hunt for clews.

But there was no inscription on the ring. The wrapper, box and string yielded as little information as the first package; the ring was hopelessly lacking in difference from the many thousands of other marriage rings worn by Viennese.

The combination of these factors could have pointed to half a million people in Vienna. One can't go examining half a million people for a single criminal. And never before was time so terribly vital a factor in solving such a gruesome charade as this one.

Every day, every hour, every minute might spell the difference between life and death, horror and rescue. But the police heads felt that with the little scent they had to help them find the trail to the house of the horror, they were beaten even if they had plenty of time.

Thereupon they did what they usually did when they came up against a problem beyond their skill. They telephoned to one of several university experts in criminology, who helped them out in such emergencies.

For, as I wrote in the previous chapter of this book, in Vienna the police have neither the marvelous organization of Scotland Yard, the individual dash and initiative of the Paris police, nor the marvelous man-hunting machine of Berlin.

The Viennese have to depend on what university professors

and scientists in their laboratories can do for them. And what these have done for the police of Vienna has put that city on a par with London, Paris, and Berlin in the record for the hunting down of criminals.

When, therefore, the chief of the Vienna police felt that he had reached the limit of his resources, in the mystery of the two fingers, he telephoned for help to a certain assistant professor in the department of criminology in a near-by university.

"Bring up the two packages," the scientist ordered over the telephone. "And make speed!"

In a high-powered automobile, racing at emergency speed, the chief of police drove up with the two exhibits in their original wrappings. The scientist was ready for him in his laboratory. Powerful microscopes were there; chemical reagents; a spectroscope; and other instruments. Also waiting for the exhibits was a professor of morbid psychology of the same university.

"Don't waste time, professor, examining the ring for clews," said the police chief, undoing the two small packages. "We've been over it in our own laboratories. Not the slightest shred of a clew! But we've got to make speed just the same!"

With a pair of delicately fashioned pincers the scientist picked up the two fingers and examined them.

"Yes." He shook his head. "It's only too clear that the poor woman was alive four days after the first finger had been amputated. The condition of the second finger shows that. And she was alive only yesterday. She may be alive still. From the character of the finger, I should say she is a woman of refinement."

"We gathered that much," the police chief said. "We must work fast, professor!"

The professor was already on the trail.

"The amputation was so cleanly done that only a skilled hand at such things could have done it," he announced. "A surgeon, a physician, an assistant or demonstrator in a dissecting room."

The police chief had seated himself by the telephone and at the professor's first words took up the instrument. A clear wire to police headquarters had already been arranged. At the other end of the wire waited his assistant.

"Character of amputation indicates a surgeon, a doctor, an assistant or demonstrator in a dissecting room," the chief repeated. "Work on that till further news."

"We'll set Squad Two on it." The assistant turned to issue orders.

In the laboratory the scientist was saying:

"And you realize, of course, that the person guilty of this atrocity did not pick his wrappers, containers, string, and mode of addressing them merely by accident. The fact that you have been able to deduce so little from the two separate packages indicates that there has been at work a student of the technique of crime, or that there has been employed an agent of such a type. Together with the skill shown in amputation, things point to an experienced hand doing the work."

"There is also a strong indication of love of cruelty and exhibitionism," added the professor of morbid psychology. "It is very likely that this love of cruelty is what has drawn the person to whatever training or pursuit has given him his skill in amputation or dissection."

The police chief telephoned the added hypothesis.

"But, speed, gentlemen!" he murmured.

The examining scientist now turned to the ring and the chief of police thought he was going to waste time examining what the police had already declared devoid of clues. At police headquarters, where the ring was taken off the finger to be examined for any inscription or jeweler's mark that might be found there, a paper tag had been tied about the ring to mark it for identification.

Now the police chief was surprised to find the scientist examining through a magnifying glass, not the ring, but the string.

"What makes you so interested in that string, professor?" he asked. "I myself tied it about the ring. And I can tell you all about its previous history, for it came out of my own desk drawer."

"I am sure you can tell me all about the string up to the moment you tied it about the ring," said the professor. "But can you tell me why the string throughout all its length should retain its original colors of twisted blue and white, and yet change to pale yellow for the quarter of an inch that has touched the inside of the ring?"

The police head stared at the bit of discolored string indicated. It was as the scientist indicated, discolored only at the point of contact with the inside of the ring.

"Why, that must have happened since ten o'clock this morn-

ing, while it was in my own pocket!" he exclaimed. "What do you make of it?"

"That there was something—or still is—on the inside of the ring that has acted chemically on the bit of string, where it touched. Let us see if we can find what that something is."

Delicately snipping off the quarter inch of discolored string, he picked it up and placed it on a microscope slide. Then he dropped a single globule of liquid on it. With a bit of absorbent cotton on his pincers he swabbed the inside of the ring with some more of the liquid. Of the resulting smear on the cotton—which had also turned color at the contact with the inside of the ring—he made a solution.

He subjected the two containers of what was on the inside of the ring to several tests. He himself looked at them through the microscope. A colleague from the chemistry department, an expert on qualitative analysis, subjected them to examinations by means of the spectroscope.

He did the latter test in the same way that astronomers analyze the chemical composition of planets billions of miles away from the earth. It is known that different substances in a state of ignition give off different kinds of light.

If, then, the light is allowed to pass through a prism and the resultant arrangement of colors is thrown on a screen or paper, a certain characteristic distribution of the spectrum or rainbow appears.

Magnesium, for instance, when burned, shows the red stripe of the spectrum so and so wide, blue so and so much narrower, *et cetera*. If, now, the light from some distant planet passed through the telescope and prism shows the same distribution of colors in the resulting spectrum, the scientist knows that there is magnesium in that planet.

He even can tell its approximate proportion in the chemical composition of that planet. It was in this way that the bit of string and the swab of absorbent cotton were analyzed. Finally the chemist announced:

"There was indigotin disulphonic acid on the inside of that ring. Also it was liquid only three or four days ago—perhaps as late as yesterday. It is that which discolored the string."

"And what is that acid used for most frequently?" asked the police chief.

"Well, it can be used to remove tatoosing," the chemist said.

"O-ho!" cried the scientist in charge of the analysis. "Then let us take another and closer look at the finger that wore the ring."

He adjusted the microscope for examination of opaque objects, and put the finger on the stand. As he did this he was saying: "This means that our cold-blooded gentleman or lady also may be well acquainted with the use of chemicals. Of course he did not foresee that a string would be tied about the ring and would thus betray the presence of the acid."

Even as he spoke the professor began to put down on paper a series of fine dots.

"You see something, professor?" asked the police chief.

"I think so. The skin is slightly corroded at one place where the ring must have covered it. I detect the following design."

The paper on which he put down the dots now showed what might be interpreted as a conventionalized drawing of a snake coiled. The whole design, drawn the size it showed on the finger, was so small that the width of the marriage ring would cover most of it.

"Undoubtedly meant to indicate a snake, this tattoo," the scientist said.

"If so, who tattooed that finger—who had it done, I mean? What would such a symbol done in tattoo suggest to you, professor?" he asked the alienist.

"It might be the expression of a morbid love for reptiles on the part of the woman," the alienist said. "But if that were the case, she would have had it tattooed large enough to show."

"Instead, it would appear that the woman actually wanted to hide it," the examining scientist concluded. "For she wears her marriage ring on the third instead of the second finger, as is usually the case."

"If she wanted to hide it," added the alienist, "I should guess that the tattooing was not of her own choice. It might have been done to her in spite of her, just as one brands cattle."

"But why so small a tattoo?" asked the police chief.

"Perhaps it was meant only as a reminder of some sort to the woman," the alienist replied. "'You're a snake!' some one may have wanted to remind her; some one who had the power to tattoo that finger—"

"Next to the marriage ring finger," suggested the examining scientist. "Let us play with the supposition. Let's see what emotion might have expressed itself by this compulsory tattooing—if it was compulsory. 'You're a snake!' it said to the

woman. Treacherous! And this is put here to remind you of it, to warn you!"

"Aren't we beginning to spin fancies?" asked the chief of police.

"Perhaps," replied the alienist. "But with morbid or psychopathic gentry—as I suspect the author of this atrocity to be—fancies move to action. Fancies to these people are what logic is to reasonable folk. In fact more.

"I may reason to myself that I ought to go to the dentist without delay. But I will probably delay. Whereas, with a morbid mind, fancies, no matter how finely spun, have tremendously compulsive power. With the gentleman we are studying—we can be practically certain it is a man who has done the amputating—the thought that a woman was treacherous as a snake would become an obsession.

"And it would be one that would not let him rest until he expressed it in some way. He would want that thought branded into the woman's consciousness. The very word 'brand' would probably come into his mind and he would begin thinking how he could bring that about.

"Perhaps he was not yet desperate enough actually to use a brand burned into the flesh. But tattooing it might not be so far away as a thought. Thinking of doing it, he would be strongly impelled to do it. Suppose him acquainted with the use of anæsthetics. What a temptation to overpower the woman, anæsthetize and tattoo her!

"What a constant reminder it would be to her of his thought! 'Here, my lady, is a little reminder of what I know you to be, treacherous as a snake!' he might say after he had done it. 'A little reminder. So tiny that most people won't notice it, even if they look closely at your finger. As yet it is only for yourself, my dear—this reminder. But unless you mend your ways—'"

The alienist stopped as he saw the dubious look in the face of the chief of police.

But the examining scientist came to his support.

"You must remember that my colleague has specialized in the workings of the morbid mind," he said to the chief of police. "I am interested in his speculation in this case. Suppose we follow his fancy a little. Will you go ahead, professor?"

"Well," continued the alienist, "we don't know, of course, whether this woman he warned was his wife or another's. It is fairly certain that this marriage ring is hers. Now what

kind of treachery does he warn her she must not continue? Infidelity is not usually described in just that way. Treachery means betraying to an enemy. 'You have betrayed me to my enemy—or are about to—I am reminding you of it!' that tattoo seems to say.

"Now, a man's enemy is either an individual or a group of individuals. It may be the police. I am inclined to think so in this case. I think so because of the trouble the man took to send those two exhibits to you, chief. It is as if the man were saying:

"'You'll betray me to the police, eh? You will point me out to them as a man they want? Well, let me help you. I myself will guide your finger to them!'"

The chief of police nodded.

"I must say, professor, you also make it sound plausible—once I grant you your premises."

"Most people," continued the alienist, "think in terms of familiar images or figures. Start saying: 'Cold as—' and most people will finish with: 'ice.' 'Pretty as a picture.' 'Sweet as sugar,' and so on. 'Tracherous,' almost inevitably goes with 'snake in the grass.'

"Also a mind like that, joined to a sinister courage, would answer a threat with a savage attack. It would be an attack begun in stealth, but would go on to extreme cruelty. Slow torture, a Satanic irony could be expected. 'We'll send your index finger to the police, my dear!' I can imagine him saying, 'You wanted them to go where it pointed, you know.' And several days later it might have been sent.

"'What! Your friends the police haven't been able to follow where you pointed? Well, we must help them again—'"

The police chief rose.

"All this seems to me pure hypothesis," he said. "But it is better than anything we have. So I shall work on what you gentlemen have furnished me. Meanwhile, if you deduce anything else, please let me know at once."

The police chief hurried back to the city and called a council of his lieutenants. He described for them the hypothetical picture the scientist had drawn. They received it with the utmost respect, for Vienna police have learned to appreciate what science and university trained minds can do in the way of solving mysteries that baffle the naked eye.

Then began a process of elimination. A single surgeon, physician or assistant in a dissecting room among tens of thou-

sands of them was sought. The hypothesis that this man probably had some acquaintance with the technique of how to hide traces of crime narrowed the hunt considerably.

Never did the police chief devote so many men to any one hunt or work them so hard. Nevertheless, with the heavy handicap of time and scantiness of clues, the force assigned to the case found itself swamped.

Meanwhile publicity was kept at a minimum. The fear was that the man sought would be either warned, frightened, or, what was most probable, infuriated if he imagined that the hunt was drawing nearer; and would either flee or complete his grim program.

The chief of police then called a secret conference of some fifty men in medical circles. To these he outlined the situation.

"So you see, gentlemen," he concluded, "at best we have little enough to go on, few men and little time. We must, therefore, draft you. Each one of you will be considered in this case a deputy of mine. You are asked to inquire about quietly, in your schools, lecture and dissection rooms, among your professional friends."

It was a new situation to his audience. But an appalling thing was taking place somewhere; and every one of the fifty willingly accepted service.

In the next few days an increasing body of rumors, gossip, suspicions and a number of well supported accusations poured into the office of the chief of police from the deputy detectives. In this way several physicians were caught for malpractice; and a larger number of charlatans and dangerous quacks were brought in. But they were all by-products of the hunt; none of them the real quarry.

Then one day a keen young surgeon on the staff of one of the big hospitals came to see the chief of police. He was one of those the chief had asked for help.

"I must say in advance that I have very little that is tangible to offer you," he said apologetically. "Nothing but a vague suspicion."

"Let me hear," requested the chief.

"We had on our staff up to two months ago a woman physician, Dr. Anna Weiss, a diagnostician," the surgeon said. "It came to our notice that in her diagnosis of the patients assigned to her she laid too much stress on surgery as the inevitable remedy.

"Then we learned that she made it an almost invariable

practice to recommend a certain surgeon, a Dr. Schmitz, not on the staff of the hospital. She told patients in each case that he was highly specialized in the particular operation she urged. Her renomination for a place on the hospital staff did not go through.

"One reason was the following: We found, in tracing the records of the patients sent to Dr. Schmitz for operation, that in a considerable number of cases the operations, ordinarily one-time affairs, were so unfortunate in their outcome that subsequent operations had to be resorted to. These were done also by Dr. Schmitz and paid for, of course, with additional fees.

"Now it is extremely hard to prove that a surgeon deliberately makes another operation necessary. But this occurred so many times that it began to be whispered about that Dr. Schmitz was either a poor surgeon—or worse. But in medical school days he had a brilliant record for surgical work and for the first three years of practice his work more than carried out that promise.

"Then talk began to spread of exorbitant fees which Dr. Schmitz demanded for operations. It looked as though the man were determined to get rich quickly. So much did he ask that in spite of his excellence as a surgeon his practice fell off.

"At that time his work still bore up well. It was then, too, that the woman member of our hospital staff, Dr. Weiss, was seen very frequently in his society. She was married to an unsuccessful business man, but the two did not get along well and seemed to agree to disagree without going to the bother of a divorce.

"At any rate the accepted understanding among their friends was that she was much more interested in Dr. Schmitz. This was largely borne out by the zeal with which she sent patients to him.

"For some time after Dr. Weiss left our hospital—this brings my story up to several weeks ago—she and Dr. Schmitz appeared to be on as friendly a basis as before. Then he was seen to pay attention to another woman, a nurse who helped him in operations. Soon after that there took place a violent quarrel in one of our cafés between Dr. Weiss and Dr. Schmitz.

"Dr. Schmitz is known for his cold-blooded, but unforgiving temperament. He maneuvered the quarrel in such a way that she was left at the table alone, and raving. After that

Dr. Weiss was not seen anywhere. That was ten days ago. Her office is closed.

"And Dr. Schmitz seems to have left the city, too. He has not been seen for a week. No one can tell us where either of them is. What makes me think there is something peculiar in all this is that the nurse, Fraulein Gertha, with whom he has been seen on increasingly friendly terms, also is gone. That's all I have to report," the young surgeon concluded.

"I'll take charge of it myself," the chief replied.

In half an hour a squad of his picked men was running about like bloodhounds on the trail of Dr. Schmitz, Fraulein Gertha, the nurse, and the missing Dr. Weiss. In an hour and a half one of them picked up the trail of Dr. Schmitz. He had been seen by his patients boarding the train for Semmerling that morning.

Semmerling is a noted winter resort in the mountains, an hour from Vienna. Several big hotels, a colony of cottages and some boarding houses cluster on a mountain height and overlook a valley, one of the most beautiful in Europe. Here and there are isolated cottages, or tiny chalets, owned and occupied at times by painters and writers in search of quiet for work.

In one of the most isolated of these a light showed, but so dimmed by blinds and shutters that from the big hotels it was scarcely visible. About it the night was as dense as the sky, which showed not even a star, so that any one, even on the lookout for visitors, would have missed the half a dozen or so figures gliding through the dark toward the cottage.

Now they were at the windows and the door of the chalet.

A strange cry rose on the night air, the wail of a woman just outside the chalet. It was such a cry as one would raise in a last extremity of pain. It died out as suddenly as it arose.

A shadow sprang across the dimly lighted window. Another.

The front door creaked. Then it opened. A giant of a man clad in long white smock appeared. In back of him a woman, also in white peered over his shoulder.

Suddenly, stern voices cried: "Throw up your hands, doctor!"

The giant leaped back and pulled the door with him. But some one had thrown a log of wood, and the door catching on it would not close. At the same moment several men hurled themselves on the giant. A woman's scream rang out as a terrific struggle ensued.

It came to an end suddenly when the butt of a revolver crashed down on the skull of the giant and stilled him.

The screaming woman was caught as she tried to escape down the valley. She was the nurse, Fraulein Gertha.

In an inner room on an operating carriage was the bound and half conscious form of a woman whose hands were swathed in thick bandages. The reek of ether filled the room.

She was revived, but it was hours before her mind at all approached sanity. It was not till she was shown Dr. Schmitz and Fraulein Gertha handcuffed and surrounded by detectives that she began to falter out a coherent story.

She confessed to having conspired with Dr. Schmitz to have patients undergo operations when they were not necessary. They coöperated in the grisly business, she as a diagnostician, he as an unscrupulous surgeon, until he became interested in Fraulein Gertha. Then a violent quarrel resulted in the café in which he publicly humiliated her.

Later she called him up on the telephone and said:

"I'll hand you over to the police!"

He was silent for a time; then he pretended to be sorry and suggested that they make up and go up to his cottage in Semmerling for a week end.

When she gladly consented, he took her up there and she suspected nothing until suddenly he clapped a cone of ether over her nostrils. When she recovered consciousness she found herself bound, bandaged, and deathly sick, as after an operation. Fraulein Gertha and the doctor were both there. It was then that she learned what had happened.

"You'll hand me over to the police, will you?" he grinned. "Well, the little warning I gave you when I tattooed that snake on your finger doesn't seem to have affected you. All right, we'll send your hand to your friends, the police—piece-meal!"

The blow Dr. Schmitz received from the revolver butt developed into a skull fracture that finished him. Fraulein Gertha received a long prison term. Dr. Weiss, crippled, was sufficiently punished by her experience.

And the police of Vienna leaned more heavily than ever thereafter on their expert allies in the university laboratories.

CHAPTER XXI

ODD VILLAINY

ONE may smile and smile, and be a villain," wrote deathless *Hamlet* in his notebook. Certainly villains sometimes take on the most curious of guises. But I have never heard of a more curious guise for a villain than one which the chief of police of Vienna told me about. And the same story seems to me to hold the record for long distance sleuthing, scenting an invisible trail by means of a telephone and some subordinates hundreds of miles away.

But then the sleuths—there were two—were of the class upon whom the police of Vienna fall back when they are up against problems mere policemen cannot solve. These sleuths were primarily scientists, university men, experts in their fields and sleuths only occasionally, when they applied their laboratory-trained minds to hunting down human birds of prey.

Through the heart of Vienna flows the river which Johann Strauss, king of waltz composers, made immortal in his "Blue Danube." It is not always blue and almost never translucent; or this story might have run somewhat differently. But the dignified broad bridges that span the river are favorite loitering places for youth in couples when spring is in the air and alluring with moonlight.

But when the night is bitter cold and the skies forbidding, others come to those bridges, wretches to whom life holds out no more enticing promise than the quitting of it. These pathetic folk are best forgotten when one listens to the strains of "Blue Danube."

On a night such as the gay Viennese do not like and on one of the principal bridges there must have sounded a revolver shot. But it was toward three in the morning; the sky was overcast; the wind howled enough to drown almost any sound; and the nearest gendarme must have avoided the bridge and its exposure to the bitter winds. As a matter of fact, at the investigation later, he had to explain how it was he was so far off his beat that he did not hear the sound of a revolver shot.

He took refuge in a modern device. Nowadays, he told the investigators, one hears so much back-firing from automobiles that people no longer pay any attention to anything that sounds like revolver fire. And he went on to say that at about the time in question he had seen a private car headed toward that bridge, backfiring as it went. He had an alibi his chiefs could not deny.

That gendarme or policeman did, however, cross that bridge at half past five that morning—or rather he got only as far as the middle. There he stopped to investigate. For close to the iron balustrade of the bridge on which lovers rest to look at the blue Danube and from which others take their leave of life, lay the limp figure of a man with a pool of blood, now dry, about his head.

From the first glance it looked like murder by a robber. The dead man was richly dressed in fur coat, and an opera hat lay a few feet away where it had rolled. The pockets were rifled, some of them turned inside out. Not a bit of jewelry remained. The only papers were those identifying the victim, Hans Voegel, a manufacturer of steel.

A workman came along and the gendarme sent him to telephone police headquarters. The robbery motive was so obvious that only a perfunctory investigation by the coroner took place. For the weapon which apparently was the cause of death was found only a few feet away from the victim, an old-fashioned revolver of thirty-two caliber.

It seemed only that the matter of catching the murderer-highwayman remained. That was difficult enough, however, seeing that the man must have had several hours' start. Nor were there finger-prints or any other identifying marks on the weapon. It was of a common make and so old that it would have been almost impossible to trace its purchaser.

But along toward noon an official of a big insurance company called up the chief of police.

"Hans Voegel was insured with us for one hundred thousand dollars," this official told the chief. "Naturally we feel the weight of the payment we have to make. If robbers are going about slaughtering our best citizens this way, we, the insurance companies, will be hard hit.

"We prefer to hit back. You must do everything possible to capture that robber. And to stimulate the hunt we are offering one thousand dollars toward the reward. This highway killing must be controlled."

A thousand American dollars in Austria is a lot of money.

The police decided to make a special effort. That is, in addition to the effort they were already making, they decided to call in experts. Their experience with experts had been most fruitful.

But when the chief called up the most promising of these, a university professor of chemistry who specialized in gunshot diagnoses, it was found that the man was three hundred miles away indulging in an enforced rest cure in the Tyrols. At first securing his aid seemed impossible.

Nevertheless the police official got in touch with this man. Professor X, let us call him, since these experts do not want to be too widely known by the criminals they are so often called upon to hunt. Professor X was called up on the long distance telephone just as he was about to sit down in a comfortable chair on the glass enclosed sun-porch of his hotel.

He was allowed a couple of pipefuls of tobacco after lunch by his doctor and was prepared to enjoy a lazy hour. It was then that the long distance appeal from the chief of police came to him to come to Vienna at once.

"But I am three hundred and sixty miles away and the doctor told me I must stay here another week, and I have just had my first full lunch!" Professor X protested. "How can I come immediately to Vienna?"

"Well, then, professor," the chief replied, "you can tell us what to do, tell it to us over the telephone. And as we carry out each stage of your instructions, we will call you up, report, and get more instructions. I know your hotel. I know they can plug in a telephone on the sun-porch, where you will want to be for the next two hours.

"Ask them to do that and you sit down in a comfortable chair, take your pipe and your paper, and enjoy yourself. When I call you up, all you need to do is turn and pick up the receiver. And if you realize our hopes, these interruptions may earn you a thousand dollars offered by the insurance company as a reward."

"*Wird gemacht, mein herr!*" said the professor, which is the German equivalent for, "Let's go!"

Five minutes later the chief of police heard over the telephone, "I'm in that easy chair and on the table next to me are the telephone, my pipe and tobacco, my newspapers, some notepaper and a pencil on which I hope to write down what findings you get in the case. Now! Get me a chemist with the following chemicals."

He gave a list which the police chief copied down. "Bring him down to our office. I want him to do some analyses for me. I will tell him what to do, step by step."

The police chief turned and gave the order to a subordinate.

"Meanwhile," continued the professor, "please unscrew the barrel of the revolver and plug up both ends tightly so as to keep out dust, air, and moisture."

"Done!" said the chief. Ten minutes later he spoke again over the wire. "And here is our department chemist in my office with the equipment you ordered. I am putting him on the wire."

The chemist introduced himself over the telephone.

"How do you do?" said Professor X. "Now please do the following, step by step, as I give them. Unwrap the revolver barrel and take out the plugs the chief put in. Good! Now pour some distilled water into the barrel, rinse it well with it and retain the water— Right!

"Please filter the water— All right. Examine for sulphuric acid, alkaline sulphides and salts of iron— Now look at your results. Was there either rust or green crystals of ferrous sulphate in the barrel?"

"No."

"Isn't the color of your solution light yellow?"

"No, sir."

"Why, how curious! Well, does it smell of sulphureted hydrogen?"

"No, it doesn't."

"Why—why, I can't understand that. But add salts of lead to the solution now— Do you get a black precipitate?"

"No, sir."

"What!" exclaimed the gunshot expert. There was a long pause and the chemist had the feeling that the expert was decidedly at a loss. "Well," resumed Professor X, "there is more mystery in this than appeared at first. You see, the results I expected you to find, such as the presence of sulphuric acid, would mean that the revolver was fired less than twenty-four hours ago.

"You have found none of these expected elements, which means that the revolver was fired *more* than twenty-four hours ago. But it is now only two in the afternoon, and the body could not have been on that bridge a full twenty-four hours, otherwise the whole city would have seen it

all yesterday afternoon. Do you find any oxide of iron, perhaps?"

The chemist looked. "Why, yes, I do!"

"Well! well! Will you please put the chief on the wire?"

The chief's voice was full of wonder.

"What's this I hear, professor?" he demanded. "That revolver was the only one found near the scene of the murder. And it was so near—a few feet—that there can be no question of coincidence."

"Nevertheless," retorted the expert, "I assure you that that revolver was not the one that killed your man. *The revolver you analyzed was fired from one and a half to five days ago!*"

"Why, then, it must have been placed there to throw us off the trail of the murderer," said the police chief. "But could not the man have anticipated all this chemical analysis, professor?"

"You are as good a judge of such things as I, chief. If he had foreseen this line of investigation, he would have known that his device would be discovered. But he probably expected you simply to hunt down the history of the revolver, which would have led you astray long enough to give him a good start.

"But I catch a note of doubt in your voice. You think there may have been a slip either in my method or in your chemist's analysis. I think I can dispel that doubt. Have you got the bullet that caused death?"

"Yes, here it is on my desk."

"Have you examined it?"

"No, at least no more than to ascertain from the coroner that it was this bullet which caused death."

"Well, take a look at its caliber."

There was no sound from the chief for some moments. Then:

"Good Heavens, professor, the bullet is that of a modern forty-four caliber, whereas the revolver is the old-fashioned thirty-two!"

"Yes, it's as I thought," the expert replied. But there was such a crestfallen note in the chief's tone that the professor kindly concealed his amusement that, at three hundred miles' distance, he should be able to see so much more clearly. He even helped to salve the chief's pride.

"Now, I'll tell you what, chief. We specialists are single-

track animals. Once off our special line we are as ignorant as babes. It's your function to harness us. And may I suggest this: I have come to the end of my usefulness in this case.

"But there is Professor Y, the assistant professor in criminology at my university. He is up here also taking a rest. I think he can take up the trail where I left it off. May I tell him you want his aid? If so, I'll call him to the telephone."

"Thank you a thousand times, professor," replied the chief enthusiastically. "Not only do I want him, but having worked with him before, I know the first thing he will ask me to do. I am ordering it done."

"Good. And one last question. You have the coat of the victim there, I think. Look at the powder burn, if any. Was the shot fired at very close range?"

The chief looked. "Yes, very."

The expert thought that over. "All right, I'll tell Professor Y and he will call you in a little while."

"No, I'll call him. I want to get some data ready for him."

In three-quarters of an hour the chief telephoned and got Professor Y on the wire this time. "Greetings," he said to his new associate.

"You want a list of the things taken from the body by the robber, professor. All right, I have them. There was—"

"May I first ask how you got that list?" the professor interrupted. "For a certain reason that is of special interest to me."

"Well, I first asked members of the family if they could tell me. It so happens that Hans Voegel's son was able to give us a rather exact list of what was in his father's pockets. For his father had told his family he was going to a gay dinner of his university fraternity that night.

"As he was dressing for it he called his son in for a chat. Herr Voegel then asked his son to help him dress as he was late for the dinner. At the father's suggestion the son took out everything from his business suit and put it into the pockets of the dress coat.

"He kept out some business papers he found. He thought, of course, his father would not want to take bulky business papers along to a student reunion. But his father called out:

"No, Fritz, I want those papers to talk over a business

deal with a friend of mine at the dinner.' So the son put everything in; and could, therefore, give us quite a detailed list of what was in his father's pockets.

"But he did not look at the business papers, which we found missing. So I called up the dead man's secretary at the office and asked whether she knew what those papers were," continued the police chief. "Now it so happens that she does know.

"Herr Voegel left the office earlier than usual, saying it was to be an all-night affair and he wanted to take a nap at home before dinner. Then he asked for those business papers his son saw. I have a description of them and the other things."

He enumerated a list.

Professor Y seemed remarkably interested in these details. When the chief was through, the other said:

"I have a rather wild theory, chief, built on a rather tenuous basis. But it can't cost anything to test it out. Don't ask me what it is as yet, because if you have it in mind even as a theory your manner may betray you to the person I hope will soon be brought to you.

"You mentioned among other things three negotiable bonds of the Darmstadter Bank. You have their numbers. Please have the Vienna branch of the Darmstadter Bank advertise a list of *eleven* of these bonds, giving numbers in the midst of which will be the three taken from the body of the dead man.

"Let the advertisement offer a price for those bonds considerably above present market value. I want eleven numbers advertised, to disguise the fact that this advertisement has any connection whatever with the Voegel case."

The police chief noted the instructions.

"But, professor," he suggested, "you don't expect any murderer to be so stupid as to try to realize money on those bonds in that way and thus walk into a prison?"

The professor was obdurate.

"Nevertheless, I think some one will turn up with those bonds. It may not be—probably will not be the man who took them. But it will be some one he has sent."

"All right, we'll try it."

"And meanwhile, of course, you are searching pawnshops and thieves' receivers for other objects stolen from the body?"

"Oh, yes, that search has already begun. Well, to-morrow I hope to have results for you. Good afternoon!"

Sure enough the following morning two detectives brought in two different objects belonging to the dead man, one found in a pawnshop, the other in the hands of a receiver of stolen goods. They were a Venetian leather wallet and a gold watch chain. Along with these the detectives had brought also the pawnbroker and the "fence."

The two were subjected to a grueling examination as to how they came into possession of these things. Both told substantially the same story and clung to it throughout. A man whose appearance they described as ragged, lean, and bearded, whose manner had the furtive sensitiveness of the pickpocket, had disposed of these objects that morning for comparatively little money.

As is the case in such transactions, few questions are asked either about the objects sold and pawned or about the identity of the seller. The name on the pawn ticket, "Johann Schmidt," was about as helpful as John Smith or John Doe would be in this country, under such circumstances.

The police were finally convinced that the two men were telling the truth and that the trail for the present at least had progressed a few steps, only to vanish into the wilderness of a million human beings.

But toward the end of the day the Vienna branch of the Darmstadter Bank called up the chief of police on the telephone.

"Some one has just come to offer three of the bonds you advertised for," the bank official said softly. "Don't you want to come and look at them?"

"Coming!" the chief snapped.

At the bank he saw a consumptive looking young man of the race track type waiting uneasily for the bank official to "check up as to the genuineness of the bonds offered." The police chief with a nod sent the bank official out of the room and, sizing up his man, towered over him.

"You know who I am?" he growled.

There was no need for the question. The instant the chief had entered the young man had jumped to his feet, his face had turned ashen-gray and he tried to edge to the door.

"Tell me where you got those bonds or we'll hang you for murder!" the chief thundered.

"Murder!" the young man shrieked. "What are you talking about? You're mad! Schleicher didn't murder anybody! He *couldn't* murder any one! My God, chief, you

must believe me! *You must!*" he shrieked. Eventually they quieted him down.

"All I know about them is that Schleicher, whom I met only last week at the races, said to me this morning:

"Manny, I found some bonds on the street yesterday. They are advertising for eleven, but I have only three. But I am not in good standing at the Darmstadter Bank. Fact is, I gave one or two checks overdrawing my account there. So I don't want to answer that advertisement. If you do it, I'll give you half of what they give for the bonds."

That he was telling the truth was apparent even to less astute readers of human nature than the police chief.

"All right, my boy, calm yourself," he said. "Just take me to your friend Schleicher."

The cowering youth told the chief where Schleicher was waiting for him. The chief brought along—or rather posted—three of his best revolver marksmen in the café where Schleicher was waiting for the panic-stricken youth. The chief himself put a revolver in his outside pocket. Then he went to the café.

In this resort of shady repute the chief saw his three aides dressed as tough characters, sitting apparently half drunk at tables close to an obscure corner. At another table in the corner, by himself, sat Schleicher, nervously waiting. The instant the chief saw him he realized how completely the pawnbroker and the fence had described the man.

The chief himself was disguised. He seemed about to pass Schleicher's table, then suddenly changed his mind and sat down close to him. Leaning over the table, he said in a low tone:

"You don't know me, but I want to warn you, comrade. Do you see that fellow at the next table? He's a crack shot. Watch him answer my nod. He's my aide. Do you see the other two near him? Also good revolver shots. My aides. Now, do you want a battle, or will you come quietly?"

The chief's hand, too, had dropped to his pocket. But it came out almost at once.

For, if anything, Schleicher was even more terrified at the chief's challenge than the crook's aide had been.

"For God's sake, what do you want of me?" Schleicher faltered, hysterical with fear. "What—what did I do?"

"You'll tell us that!" answered the chief.

At police headquarters the young consumptive identified Schleicher as the man who gave him the bonds to sell. The pawnbroker identified him as the man who had left the gold

watch-chain at his shop; and the receiver of stolen goods pointed him out as having left the Venetian leather wallet. But their identification was now unnecessary.

"I admit it! I stole them!" Schleicher cried. "But by my mother's memory, I swear I didn't do anything worse than that!"

And Schleicher's story, told with hysterical sincerity, was substantially this:

He had been a skilled pickpocket for years, but drink and drugs had unnerved him, and he sank to a lower level in his following. He now picked the pockets of drunken revelers only. The night of the Voegel affair he was prowling about the Opera in *Ringstrasse*, Vienna's most prominent boulevard, looking for victims.

About three in the morning he saw Herr Voegel issue from a leading restaurant. The man waved aside the cab drivers who bid for his patronage and started walking toward the river. He was very unsteady on his feet. Schleicher followed.

Voegel passed a beggar and seemed touched by her plight, for he took out his wallet and gave the woman a bill. Then, still holding his wallet in his hand, he wove his way along until he came to a poorly lit block. Here the lack of illumination must have suggested rest, for the drunken man sat down on a stoop and leaning against the rail, fell asleep.

It was then that Schleicher came up and relieved Voegel of his wallet, the gold watch and chain and some of his papers.

"And that's all I did, chief!" Schleicher wailed. "Yet you come with revolvers as if I had committed murder!"

"Well, you'll have to tell a more convincing story than that, my boy," the chief said. "It isn't convincing enough to clear you of the charge of murdering Herr Hans Voegel, the steel manufacturer, whose possessions you confess to have taken!"

A shriek rent the air.

"Murder! I a murderer? My God, I didn't even know he was dead. Chief, he must have died of heart disease on that stoop! Because I never touched him with the least violence! Oh, my God! Don't accuse me of such a crime!"

The chief was not impressed, though it did seem to him the man was not the type that kills. But he had him locked up and then called up the expert, Professor Y, who had suggested this line of investigation. He told him of the grilling and of the prisoner's behavior.

"Of course, the man is lying," the chief said in conclusion. "And yet he really does not look as if he, in his right senses, could have killed Herr Voegel. This much I have corroborated.

"Herr Voegel's fraternity mates corroborate Schleicher's statement that he left the reunion at about three in the morning, and that he was drunk. But he protested that the night air would do him good and positively refused to let any one go along with him. But this is not enough to clear Schleicher."

The expert at the telephone smiled.

"He is guilty, of course, of picking Voegel's pockets," he said. "But do this, chief. Go to the bridge where the body was found. Look at the iron railing for some sort of fresh scar—on the lower edge of the inside of the rail."

The chief was too experienced a policeman to express surprise at the instructions. But when he called up the expert on the telephone an hour later his voice expressed not only surprise, but amazement.

"Why, yes, professor, there is a bruise on the iron there! About two days old, I should say. Did anybody report it?"

"No," the expert laughed with a thrill of pride. "Just a lucky bit of theorizing. Professor X and I put our heads together and built a little hypothesis based on the revolver that did not belong to the bullet that killed your man. Here is our guess:

"Herr Voegel has had a run of poor, even disastrous business. He saw ruin facing him and his family. His affairs are perhaps even now being discovered as only a façade over complete wreckage.

"Like many a good man he must have decided that he could not face the ordeal of seeing his family destitute after a lifetime of wealth. So he insured himself for one hundred thousand dollars. The policy undoubtedly is so written that it cannot be attached as part of his business liabilities. But it also provides for non-payment of the insurance in case of proved suicide of the insured. Practically every policy provides for that, especially one carrying so large an amount.

"Then he bought an old revolver, and a day or two before the planned suicide, fired off one shot. He did not want that shot heard at the time of his suicide because *both* revolver shots might then be heard.

"That day, in accordance with his plot, he saw to it that his secretary had a chance to observe what papers he took

home with him. For the same reason he called in his son to help him dress and, by having him transfer his things from the pockets of his business suit to those of his dress suit, he got his son to remember those articles. Voegel, Sr., evidently knew something of how the police go about hunting for supposed murderers.

"Then he went to the banquet. In his opera coat were two revolvers. One, the old-fashioned one you found some ten feet away from the body, as if dropped by a murderer in his flight. The other one, the one with which Voegel killed himself, had a stout cord tied to it.

"Voegel knew his Vienna of the early hours of the night. He knew that if he played drunk some nighthawk would notice him. If then, he also displayed money and pretended to be very drunk indeed, some creature like Schleicher would eventually follow him. So he played his grim little comedy until Schleicher had robbed him of easily traceable goods.

"Once Schleicher had run off with his wallet and other booty, Voegel rose and went to the bridge. Here he had undoubtedly concealed a stone considerably heavier than the revolver. Now he tied that stone to the end of the stout cord, which in turn was tied to the revolver.

"Then the unhappy man threw the decoy revolver ten feet from him. Standing close to the river rail the man lowered the stone over the side of the rail. Then he placed the revolver to his heart and fired.

"The shot went home. The man sank down dead. The stone dragged at the cord and whisked the revolver along in its plunge to the river below. But as the revolver struck the inside of the rail, the weight of the stone must have caused the revolver to strike with considerable force against the rail and made the bruise you found there. Then, dragged down by the stone, the revolver went over the side of the bridge into the river.

"Drag our blue Danube at that point. The villain of your story is not Schleicher, but poor Voegel himself. He tried to cheat the insurance company and get Schleicher implicated as the murderer!"

Several hours later the river confirmed what the experts had guessed. And the insurance company, grateful, gave the experts some of the money that might have gone to poor Voegel had not that pathetic villain been foiled by the keen university minds working over the telephone three hundred miles away.

CHAPTER XXII

A MODERN ROBIN HOOD

BUT in rare instances the criminal, so far from being mentally deficient is superior to the great majority of honest citizens in education, poetic fire, and inventive ability," said the professor of criminology before the class of Vienna detectives. "Such of course was Hugo Breitwisser, of whom you all know."

It was in the Crime Museum of the Vienna Police Department that I heard the professor give this lecture before a score of city detectives in training.

He said no more of Hugo Breitwisser during the lecture and I saw that the name was as familiar to these fledgling sleuths as their own names. But to me, newly arrived in Vienna, it was still only a name.

So after the lecture I asked the professor for the story.

"No, the man to tell you that is Inspector Johann Rapp, the curator of the Crime Museum," said the professor. "Because he can illustrate the story with relics of the man and his career."

"Relics?" I echoed. "You say it as though the man were an historical character. But I understand that his story is only three or four years old."

"In the history of crime in Austria—and perhaps in a world history of crime—Breitwisser will go down as a man who combined the inventive genius of an Edison, the polish and daring of a Raffles, and the gallantry of a modern Robin Hood.

"But let Inspector Rapp tell you about it."

So I went to the simple, bearded policeman who had created the Crime Museum of the Vienna Police and had him take me to the room of which almost the whole was devoted to the art of Hugo Breitwisser, the criminal who, according to the professor I heard, combined so many talents in one.

"Hugo Breitwisser came of a line of cultured engineers," Inspector Rapp began. "Honest citizens as far back as their family can be traced—and so rich in achievement was the family that its honored history is easily traceable.

"Now how in such a strain there can enter the spirit of evil, as exemplified in Hugo, is something I, a mere policeman, cannot explain. Perhaps you, sir, who have traveled much, can tell me."

I could not. Such explanations lie with whatever powers make monsters and angels. Besides, after I had heard the story of Hugo Breitwisser I was not so clear that he belonged in the category of monsters; though of course he was very far indeed from being an angel.

But that he was a genius let his story show.

His parents sent him to the university to study engineering. He was a wiry, studious youth, with a charming presence and a gift for making practical use of all his talents. When he arrived at the university he asked his faculty advisers to be allowed to make a few changes in his courses.

He seemed to know exactly what he wanted; the subjects he chose were related to engineering and he was so serious a student that the professors permitted him to choose these special courses and said to one another:

"There goes a youth who will succeed. He has enrolled in even more courses than he needs for his profession."

The learned gentlemen were right as far as they knew. But what they did not know was the profession young Hugo Breitwisser had really in mind when he chose these courses.

Had they known it, that sedate Austrian university would have been terribly perturbed. For the quiet young fellow of sixteen had deliberately marked out a course of studies which would make him the most competent burglar in the history of crime.

He chose courses that would teach him the tensile strength of various metals that go into the making of bars, bolts, locks, strong-boxes, and safes. He took courses in the making of steel tools.

He studied the chemical effects of powerful acids on iron and steel. He learned the nature and use of the oxy-acetylene torch with which one can burn a hole in a steel door.

He studied the theory and practice of safe and vault construction.

He kept himself in perfect physical trim and took lessons in jujutsu, wrestling, boxing and the French "savate," the kick with which the Apaches of Paris have laid out many a policeman.

He even took—"for diversion" he told the president of the university—a course with the department of criminology

where he was taught the technique the police use in hunting down criminals.

Week-ends during his college course would find young Breitwischer setting out for "hikes in the mountains," always alone. He would start on a train and get out at a small town or city the same evening.

But instead of heading for the mountains or the open road he would take a small room at a hotel and go out reconnoitering in the town.

Toward ten in the evening he would return to his hotel room and unpack his knapsack, apparently in preparation for bed.

But instead of toothbrush, pyjamas, and similar to-be-expected articles there would appear queer looking tools of steel, most of them made by Breitwischer in some secret corner of his university workshops.

With these under his overcoat, the young Breitwischer would wait until the hotel was closed for the night. Then opening the street doors with a skeleton key he had devised, he would steal out and go to a store or private home he had selected for his operations.

On these he would practice what he had learned—in his own way—in theory at the university. He would break into a grocery store to try out an instrument he had invented; he would pick an intricate lock on a warehouse; he would search out a burglar alarm in a private home and cut its wires before it should wake any one.

Then, having effected an entrance, Breitwischer would depart without taking anything worth so much as a cent. He knew exactly what he wanted out of these excursions.

He wanted preparation and training for big hauls, not the nuisance of police pursuit for small stakes. He was conducting his own laboratory course in burglary.

At twenty-one he was graduated with an engineer's degree.

His family expected him to enter the office of an influential relative or friend, where a prosperous career as engineer awaited him.

Instead of doing this he immediately and quite completely disappeared. From Berlin came a brief letter saying: "I want to knock about the world by myself a bit. I shan't write.

"But don't worry. I'll always land on my feet. I will only say that I am bound for America."

Instead of that, however, he returned at once to Vienna to

launch on his carefully prepared, college-and-university trained career.

In the tiny room in the poorest workingmen's section of Vienna he immersed himself in books and read day and night, voraciously, while a young beard and mustache daily made his face harder to recognize. He read diversely too.

He read the philosophy of anarchism. Whether it was anarchism that made Breitwischer choose his career, or whether having chosen his career he was now enthusiastic about the one philosophy that most excused it, is impossible to tell. But Breitwischer decided he was a full-fledged anarchist.

He read detective and mystery fiction. Most alluring of all he found the stories of Raffles, that society figure who moved in the wealthiest circles and robbed them so elegantly.

And he read everything he could find about that half-legendary, half-real, Robin Hood, the robber chief of Sherwood Forest who took from the rich to give to the poor. There were plenty poor folk living on every side of Breitwischer in his chosen retreat.

His beard and mustache had grown by then. And he decided the time had come when he could put into practice all that he had learned in college and read in fiction.

This was in the midst of winter and that year it was a bitter winter for the poor. The weather was cruelly cold. There was much unemployment and economic distress.

There was also a coal shortage and profiteers were looking forward to a merry Christmas for themselves. For they had cornered the coal market, kited the prices, and the weather had turned so brutal that the coal dealers were making a killing.

One either had to pay their price or freeze.

Two days before Christmas there entered briskly into the office of one of the biggest of these coal profiteers a decorously dressed young man, with neatly trimmed young beard and mustache. It was just before closing time and the young man seemed in a businesslike hurry.

"I am secretary to a rich and philanthropic gentleman who shall be nameless," he said to the coal dealer. "He wishes to make a gift of coal to one thousand poor families in time for their Christmas celebration.

"Here is a list of their names and addresses."

"Do you know what it means to make one thousand deliveries practically overnight at a minute's notice?" the coal dealer said.

"I don't want to know anything but the cost!" the young man said. "How much?"

The coal dealer saw to it that it was much.

But the young man briskly counted out the required sum; handed the coal dealer a brief contract to sign for the delivery of the coal in time for Christmas; and departed without another word.

The coal dealer was too late for the bank that day. So he put the package of bills into his safe; saw to the wiring of his burglar alarm; rubbed his hands with satisfaction at the windfall of a large order at higher than market price.

Then like a little captain of industry he summoned a small army of trucks and truck drivers and set them to work.

One thousand families in the poorest quarter of Vienna were electrified that night, and the day before Christmas by receiving unexpectedly gifts of several sacks of coal each, with a cordial message of cheer from an anonymous donor.

And the coal dealer himself got an overwhelming surprise next morning; but not a pleasant one. During the night a burglar had broken into his office, cut through the door of his steel safe as though it were made of pasteboard, and walked off with, not only all the money he had received from the secretary of the anonymous donor, but a certain sum besides.

The newspapers had a rare treat that day. Here were two seasonal stories that made one gorgeous one. Anonymous millionaire makes gifts of coal to one thousand poor families; and equally anonymous burglar walks off with the money paid for the coal.

The two events, apparently joined by coincidence only, stirred the imagination and there was much public and private speculation as to who the philanthropist was. The police, of course, were much more interested in who the burglar was and where.

They were doubly interested, not only because he had committed a burglary involving a goodly sum of money; but because he did the job and concealed his tracks with such baffling expertness. Not a single one of those slips that give police their start in the hunt was left by the burglar.

It was a job so workmanlike that even the university experts who help out the Vienna police in difficult cases could do nothing about this burglary but admire.

In the midst of public speculation and discussion of the

case, there came to the offices of every newspaper in Vienna a carbon copy of the same letter. I need not inform my readers that it appeared in every newspaper at once:

"What I took from the safe of coal dealer Metz on the night of December 23 was largely my own money. He and his fellow coal profiteers have sucked so much money from the veins of the poor that it was only fair he should be made to disgorge some of it.

"So I ordered him to deliver to one thousand poor families sacks of coal and paid him in cash. I took back that cash that same night plus ten per cent of the sum from other money I found in his safe.

"I took the extra ten per cent as my fee for making a leech disgorge the human blood he has sucked."

The message was signed, "Robin Hood."

It was Hugo Breitwischer's own introduction to the public.

There followed at fairly frequent intervals thereafter, a series of burglaries such as Vienna had never before experienced.

Safes up to then considered impregnable were opened up by burglars—was it the same band or only an individual?—as easily as though by their owners. The burglary experts from police headquarters found their knowledge almost foolishly inadequate.

Here was a new technique employed; indeed several different lines of new technique; new kinds of tools; an inside knowledge of safes and metals of locks and doors; a bewildering skill in obliterating tracks that might help the police; a baffling of experts at their own game.

Finally a special commission of these experts in criminal hunting from the universities was organized to hunt down the astounding burglar. For it became clear after a while that there could not have sprung up suddenly a *group* of superburglars, and that it must be some one genius at work.

From a renewed study of the burglary committed at the office of coal dealer Metz, the commission decided that it was "Robin Hood" who was behind the whole series of burglaries. For every time he made a haul—and it was always a good haul—some district inhabited by poor folk was showered by gifts of money sent through the mail by an anonymous donor.

"Well, if we can't trail our bird to his nest, perhaps we can lure him to ours," decided the commission in effect. So they prepared the decoy.

There appeared in the newspapers soon stories about a

wholesale butcher who was growing rich as the result of some sharp profiteering in meat. He had just closed a large deal with the government for the feeding of its army, according to these stories, and had bought his wife and daughters a famous collection of jewels a formerly prosperous prince had to sell.

To substantiate the story this butcher, his wife, and daughters—entirely unknown up to then—began to appear at the opera and charity balls dazzlingly clad in jewels.

But the family kept early hours. By midnight there were no lights in the windows of their new mansion; and presumably every one was asleep there.

But in the darkness of the living room where an old-fashioned safe was ostentatiously placed, there might have been heard one night tiny sounds like a mouse gnawing. No one who was not awake and waiting could have possibly heard that faint rasping of a steel file.

But suddenly the lights flashed on and four men advanced on a figure crouching before the safe.

The four detectives surrounded the slim young fellow with the bag of burglar's tools spread out in front of the safe. The detectives were so sure of their prey that only one of them had his revolver drawn.

This requires a short explanation. In England the criminal so seldom resorts to firearms that detectives carry revolvers by special permission from their superiors, given only for special occasions.

In Austria detectives do carry revolvers. But they have little occasion to use them other than as threats. The Austrian criminal is ordinarily a mild fellow who will rather serve a term in prison for a minor offense than hang for a murder.

The four detectives were sadly unprepared therefore for what happened when the lights flashed up. The young fellow they surrounded whipped up the revolver that lay among the tools, shot out the lights, then shot his way out of the room.

Two detectives fell prostrate, one dead. Two others pulled belatedly at their revolvers and shot wildly in the dark.

When the lights were turned on again all that showed in the room of the burglar were his tools and a rope at the window. He had swung out of the room on the emergency fire escape device of a rope on a reel, with which the room was equipped.

But it did the young burglar no good. The trap had been

too thoroughly prepared. As he swung down to the sidewalk three strong pair of arms closed about the young burglar and bound him.

He was hustled into a closed car and, with guards clinging to the running board and literally sitting on him, young Breitwisser put up such a threshing struggle that both he and his captors were exhausted by the time they got him to the city detention prison.

This prison was for temporary confinement of witnesses and accused, and had not yet been prepared for young geniuses like Breitwisser. But throughout the next day it sufficed.

In the evening, however, Breitwisser said to his prison guard:

"I'll bet the papers are full of me to-night."

The guard nodded. "They are, indeed."

"Listen," pleaded Breitwisser, "won't you get me several copies of every paper and let me read them? I'll pay you well for them."

The guard saw no harm in that. Through another guard he sent for the papers Breitwisser ordered. When these were shoved into his cell it made a small mountain of paper.

For he was the sensation of the day and there was not a paper in Vienna and neighboring cities that did not already carry lengthy accounts of the "Robin Hood who kills policemen," as one of them described him.

The prisoner appeared consumed with egotism. For he stayed up half the night buried up to his waist in newspapers, reading and apparently rereading every word about him.

He had partly undressed, so that the guard who passed his cell every quarter of an hour or more was not surprised to see him once with one of his shoes in his hand, as if he had taken it off for ease and then catching sight of something in the newspapers forgot to put the shoe down.

But Breitwisser was interested in something more dynamic than newspaper accounts. He had always counted on the accident of capture and had long before prepared himself.

In the soles of his shoes, which his captors had not thought to examine, were several fine steel saws, made and tempered by Breitwisser himself.

Breitwisser's cot was against the back of the cell where there was a barred window. Each time the guard passed his cell to be gone from a quarter of an hour to twenty minutes,

Breitwisser whipped about and filed away at the rustiest part of one of the bars.

During one of the twenty-minute absences of the guard he had got far enough to saw the bar through. With a powerful wrench he broke it loose. It left a space so narrow that it would have given a child difficulty to wriggle through it.

The guard had noticed on some of his glances into the cell that Breitwisser, after reading each newspaper, had twisted it as if with fury and thrown it to the floor.

As the night wore on the floor of the cell was strewn with these thick twists of newspaper. But the guard thought nothing of it except that in the morning he would make Breitwisser clean his cell.

Toward four in the morning as he passed his cell the guard saw Breitwisser peer at a newspaper as though the type were too fine for him. Sure enough Breitwisser called:

"Are your eyes stronger than mine, friend? Here is something printed in such fine type that I can't make it out, with my eyes tired as they are."

The guard, a good-hearted peasant, was flattered at the appeal by this educated young fellow and, taking the paper Breitwisser handed him, leaned toward the light in the cell to read it.

From behind his back Breitwisser whipped out the bar he had wrenched loose and knocked the guard senseless with a single blow.

Reaching out he caught the man's coat, pulled him toward the cell and managed to get at the cell keys.

An hour later another guard came on duty to relieve the night man. He wondered why the other did not show up at the rest room where the exchange of guards usually took place.

He went to the detention block to look for him. He was nowhere in sight. Yet everything else seemed as it should be.

In each cell lay a prisoner huddled in sleep, one of them with a blanket over his head.

When the relief guard had searched in vain he aroused the warden and the two roused the prisoners. It was then found that in Breitwisser's cell the sleeper was not a prisoner, but the guard, dead.

He was partly clad in Breitwisser's clothes. His own were gone.

Hanging from the bars of the cell window, one of which was gone, was a rope made of twists of newspapers bound together with strips of mattress ticking cut to stout strings. When tested the rope was found strong enough to bear considerable weight.

I would not have believed this strength had I not had the opportunity to prove it for myself. For this rope is one of the exhibits in the "Breitwisser room," at the Vienna Crime Museum.

Then I realized that a newspaper of, say, ten sheets, if rolled into a sort of club and then twisted, with stout strips of mattress ticking bound around to keep the paper from untwisting, makes surprisingly strong rope.

The prison officials decided, of course, that Breitwisser had escaped by way of the window and the rope—though it was hard to believe he could have squeezed through. They hunted therefore in that direction. In vain.

For Breitwisser, after planting his deception, had really sneaked down the corridor and hid in a ventilator shaft for three days and nights until he saw his chance. Then he slipped out of prison.

Fortunately for him there was sounding at that time throughout the world the rising thunder of calamity. The great war was swooping down on humanity like a whirlwind. Austria was in the forefront of events.

A few days after Breitwisser broke prison Vienna had something vastly more disturbing than his escape to think about.

For four terrible years Vienna had increasingly something else to think about.

When the armistice was signed Breitwisser was all but forgotten.

In the economic misery that followed the conclusion of war Austria was one of the worst sufferers. It sank a prey to dissolution and nearly died. As with carrion, so with sick nations, vultures are attracted.

Profiteers of the meanest caliber flourished on its meager flesh and bones, gross, overfed human vultures.

One of these was a former butcher, Schwartz, the very man the police had used as a decoy in luring Breitwisser to his trap. This man, who was played up as a profiteer in the decoy had really become one. His wife and daughters now wore jewels that were really theirs and not loaned them by the police.

These birds of feather socially flocked with their kind, other gross, conscienceless profiteers, or *shieber*, as the Austrians called them.

They had more money than ways of spending it and dissipated correspondingly, but got comparatively little pleasure out of it. It takes a gift to know how to play pleasantly.

In a café Schwartz was flattered one day by the friendliness of a dashing young cavalry officer who had sat down at his table and proved talkative. He was a Count von Richard, he said. Former Butcher Schwartz was thrilled at being deep in cups with a Count von Richard.

He invited the young officer to his home; and to his delight the count accepted.

He not only accepted Schwartz's hospitality, but became apparently a boon companion. For weeks he taught Schwartz how to play delightfully. Then he said to him:

"Why don't you give a party that will be remembered? Make it a costume affair. At your house. Get the best string orchestra. The best French champagnes. Get up special illumination. Make it a carnival. If you wish I will take charge."

Schwartz was delighted. He gladly let Count von Richard take charge of the preparations, and invited all the profiteers and their jewel-clad wives, daughters, and mistresses to come in costume.

They came, each vying with the others for show. The wines flowed, the guests grew racketty. Count von Richard took his host aside.

"Look here, Johann, the guests are going to be more than gay. Go around to those who have big jewels and tell them you want no losses to mar the party.

"You know how these things have a way of dropping off and getting lost. They trust you. Tell them you will put their biggest jewels in your safe until they leave.

"Then put them away in your safe for the night."

Even if the suggestion had been a foolish one Schwartz would have listened to Count von Richard. In a matter so practical, Schwartz not only listened, but followed. So did a score of his guests.

The result was that in half an hour Schwartz went to his bedroom with a hat full of blazing jewelry. Opening his strong safe, he dumped the glittering hatful in, carefully closed the safe, locked it with all its modern safety devices and then rejoined the party.

He found Count von Richard hilarious with drink. The young officer went reeling all through the house, shouting Viennese café songs. But feeling sleepy he found himself in his host's bedroom and lay down for a nap.

Schwartz's valet, knowing how much his employer trusted the young nobleman, saw nothing wrong in letting him fall asleep on his master's bed.

Toward morning some of the guests began to leave and asked for their jewels. Schwartz went to his safe to get them. When he stepped into his bedroom he thought he was seeing things through the haze of drinks, nightmarish things.

His safe door was blown wide open and every jewel, every bit of negotiable paper was gone. The loot amounted to more than one hundred thousand dollars. Count von Richard was missing, too.

There was uproar. Clamor for police. A scurrying of detectives. The newspapers joined the racket.

Then some newspaper recalled that Schwartz had been used years before in the decoying of the famous Robin Hood burglar.

Whereupon, too, it was realized that the missing Count von Richard had worn as his party costume a suit of Lincoln green, which only now was recognized as the legendary costume of Robin Hood.

For two years the police hunted in vain for Robin Hood.

Then there came a whisper of a clew to the police in Vienna. To a drowsy town about twenty miles from Vienna had come a stranger to live. He called himself a retired young business man, a recluse who was immersed in books and mechanics.

He lived quietly all alone and did not mingle with neighbors. He went out only on a bicycle for his exercise. Why did he live so exclusively alone?

Several sturdy men with knapsacks on their shoulders, apparently on a holiday tramp, stopped to drink at the well in this recluse's garden. He was away on a bicycle spin. As he rode into his garden something happened.

I have never been able to find out who opened fire first, Breitwisser or the detectives. But it was Breitwisser who fell dead, riddled with bullets.

In his home was found the most complete library on crime technique ever assembled.

In the basement of his home was a laboratory and machine

shop combined. Here it was that Breitwisser spent his time fashioning tools, electrical devices, marvelous contrivances of all kinds, all with one end in view—burglary.

Inspector Rapp, curator of the Crime Museum of the Vienna Police, as he finished telling me Breitwisser's story, turned to the collection of these inventions by Breitwisser and exclaimed:

“Did you ever see workmanship like this! An artist and an Edison in one!”

And I wonder what the romancers of the future will call Hugo Breitwisser long before his name is as old as the legendary Robin Hood's.

CHAPTER XXIII

TOOLS OF THE LAWLESS

AS I think again of the crime museums of Scotland Yard, of the Paris police, of the police of Berlin, and of the unexpectedly charming one in Vienna—who would expect *charm* in a crime museum?—there comes to my mind in each case some one object more clearly than the others.

From the gloomy picture in Scotland Yard there emerges the plaster cast of a head, one of a long row. About the throat of the original, as the plaster cast shows, there was, when the clay was pressed on it, a ring of depression. And that impress of a hempen rope about a human throat seems to stamp the insistent message, "Scotland Yard is Nemesis to those who prey on man!"

Of the Paris museum I see most clearly a letter written in blood, written to unhinge a boy's mind as he sat trembling in a prison cell, waiting to be called to testify against his accomplices. The letter was written by one of his elders, in the same prison, and designed to stop the boy from uttering accusations. So well did the smuggled message do the work that the lad cut his own throat.

That is the typical French criminal as I see him, the man who thought up the devilish scheme, let his own blood so that he might write the letter with it, had it smuggled to the boy's cell, and thereby struck him dead even though iron bars and prison wardens stood between victim and murderer.

Of the Berlin museum I see most clearly a butcher's cleaver—and notwithstanding many years as a police reporter I hasten for my own comfort's sake to pass in recollection on to the Vienna museum, where what I see is a page of parchment, hand illumined in Latin, the rich brown of age harmonizing with the glory of blues, reds, and gold of the great initials. And that work of beauty stands to my mind as quite typical of the other exhibits of crime in the Vienna museum.

Let me illustrate what I mean by telling its story. A bent old rag picker hobbled across one of Vienna's once magni-

ificent boulevards—they are somewhat more seedy now that royalty no longer dwell in the palaces—and timidly stopped a policeman.

“Can your highness tell me where I can show something to some very learned professor?” he asked apologetically.

The gendarme stared at him. “What do you want to show and what kind of a learned gentleman must it be?”

The rag picker unslung the bundle from his back and took out a roll of dirty newspapers. “That’s what I would like to know myself,” he said. “What kind of learned gentleman I should look for. But here is what I want to show him. It looks so—so curious that I am sure it should be—well looked into.”

Unrolling the newspapers he revealed a sheet of what the policeman decided was from some very ancient book indeed; no, not a book, the policeman concluded on second thought, but something that came before books were made, something that was written or rather drawn by hand.

It was a parchment page with hand-painted initials and letters and pictures of holy people. It was a beautiful brown with age and looked like something that the learned world should hear about.

“Where did you get it?” the policeman asked.

The rag picker rolled up his find and put it back in his bundle.

“Back in *Marienstrasse* there was an old second-hand book dealer whose business was running down. He died two or three days ago and that seemed to put an end to his business because his widow has closed up the shop now. But first she had a bargain sale of all the second-hand books left in the place.

“I suppose the stuff that was not bought up at the sale she considered not worth trying to sell any more. So she stopped me one day and asked if I wanted to buy the remnants as so much rag paper. I did and took home a lot of the books.

“I was rummaging about in them to see what I could find when among the rubbish I came across this queer looking page. Don’t you think it is worth showing to some one who knows something about these old things?”

“Yes, indeed,” agreed the gendarme. “Go up to the corner and turn to your left. You will see a big building with white marble columns. It is the art museum of a rich man. Show them this page. They may buy it of you.”

The rag picker thanked the policeman humbly and did as he suggested. The servant who opened the door knew enough, after one glance at the illuminated manuscript, to let the man in. A few minutes later a grave spectacled gentleman, the curator of the rich man's museum, spread the sheet before him and examined it.

As he looked there came an expression of excitement into the gentleman's face. He went into the library and came out again with an armful of authoritative works. He examined the rag picker's find and alternately looked into these works, his scholarly excitement growing.

All this was not lost on the rag picker who was looking on with keen interest. Finally the curator became conscious of the man's presence.

"I'll pay you—"

He named a price that was probably more than the rag picker had earned in five years. At first the man's eyes appeared to light up with joy. Then craft showed.

"I don't know that I want to sell this—yet," the rag picker replied. "At least not till I know something of its value. I'll take it to the state museum."

The curator happened to know that a certain rich man was presenting a collection of medieval manuscripts to the state museum and was looking for that very page of parchment to complete his gift. For this was the page missing from a celebrated copy of the New Testament well known by scholars and art connoisseurs. Books of reference described the missing page so minutely that there was no mistaking the identity of the rag picker's find.

"Don't take it away," the curator said. "We will pay you whatever price you think fair."

The rag picker thought for some moments. Then he named a price that made the curator start.

"Why, you're asking a fortune!" he exclaimed. "What makes you think it's worth a hundredth of that?"

"I don't know what it's worth and there's no harm in finding out elsewhere."

The upshot of the matter was that inside of a week the manuscript was bought of the rag picker for seven thousand five hundred dollars, nearly the price he asked.

The announcement of the purchase of the famous manuscript created widespread interest in scholarly and art circles and many eminent authorities came to examine it.

One of them, an expert of international reputation, examined

it with a magnifying glass, long and earnestly. Then he straightened up and put away his spectacles.

"I am sorry," he said to the curator, "but it is my opinion that this is a fake!"

The curator was shocked.

"What are your grounds for such a serious charge?"

"Certain aspects of the Latin style, certain expressions that do not conform with the rest of the authentic manuscript." He pointed them out.

The curator remained unconvinced. "Your grounds are highly debatable."

Whereupon the debate raged not only between the curator and the expert but spread from them to partisans of either side until the controversy became heated indeed. Finally the rich man who had bought the manuscript decided that its genuineness could not be decided on merely stylistic grounds. He went to his friend, the chief of police of Vienna.

"You employ all kinds of experts to expose frauds and run down criminals," he said to the chief. "There is a suspicion that I have been swindled in the purchase of this manuscript. Will you have it examined by your experts, just as you would any other suspicion of fraud?"

The chief of police turned to his roster of experts of all kinds, on whom he called whenever a problem was too much for his own men. He had experts of all kinds, all university men—experts in gunshot wounds, poisons, psychology, handwriting, tool making, blood stains, tobacco ash analysis, and what not. "I think this a matter for Dr. Krants. He is an expert on the chemical effects of age on documents and kindred things."

The manuscript went therefore to Dr. Krants. The man went over the manuscript with more powerful magnifying lenses than any one before had done. It did not take ten minutes before he declared emphatically.

"This is a fake!"

"What is your proof?" demanded the owner.

"This spot of grease," said the expert, pointing to one.

The rich man's curator shook his head. "I am sorry to contradict you, Dr. Krants. But such spots are on the contrary proof of the authentic age of the manuscript. One finds them in all really ancient parchments."

The expert nodded. "That may be. I don't know these things. But when such parchment was first written on, was it new?"

"Decidedly," the curator said. "For such an important bit of work only new parchment would be used."

"Which is what I thought. So that any grease spots that fell on the manuscript in the course of time and mishandling would cover the inked lettering as well as the adjacent parchment, would it not?"

"Of course."

"Well, if you look at this grease spot through this magnifying glass you will see that the ink of these three letters is *over* the grease spot; that instead of *covering* the ink the spot of grease is *under* the ink. The forger has made a slight mistake in his job; but a fatal one, in my opinion.

"He manufactured the grease spots to give the effect of much use. But he forgot to do his forging *first*, so that the grease spots would cover the ink, as it must do in all genuine manuscripts."

The curator and the rich man were almost convinced but not wholly. Whereupon the expert challenged them.

"If you will let a colleague of mine scrape off the color on one of the initials I think you will have absolute proof of the worthlessness of this manuscript as an antique."

After some hesitation the challenge was accepted. A colleague of Dr. Krants's, an expert in the chemistry of coloring matter, delicately scraped off the glorious blue of the hand-illuminated initial on the page. He then subjected it to a minute microscopic and qualitative analysis.

"Dr. Krants is right," he announced. "This blue used in this initial is composed of—" He named a certain mineral product. "And this product was not known before 1890."

A search was immediately made for the rag picker. He was found comfortably ensconced in a good hotel, well dressed, and almost unrecognizable in the well groomed, suave gentleman who greeted the detectives.

"And what is the charge, may I ask, on which you undertake to arrest me?" he asked smilingly.

"Of fraud in representing the manuscript to be genuine."

The man shook his head. "I made no statement as to the genuineness of the manuscript. I can produce the policeman to whom I first showed it. He will testify that I was entirely ignorant even as to the value of the parchment. Indeed it was at his suggestion that I took the thing to the gentleman who now charges me with deliberate fraud."

"We know that," replied the detective in charge of the arrest. "But the colors used on that manuscript are so rarely

used that we had no difficulty in tracing them to the dealer who specializes in them. And so little of these colors is sold that we have hopes in a certain direction—”

The detective opened the door and a man stepped in. He asked the newcomer, “Is this the man who bought the paints of you which were used on the manuscript?”

But the positive identification was not needed. The moment the paint dealer had entered the forger of ancient manuscripts realized that his game was up. He made a deal with the rich man refunding the purchase money in return for a let-up in prosecution.

This fraudulent manuscript I saw in the crime museum of the Vienna police and remember it as characteristic of so many other exhibits there. Near it was a collection of bone implements which another man had tried to sell as genuine antiques. The fraud was revealed only when experts found that in the same collection, which were represented as found all together, there were specimens that would represent civilizations many centuries apart.

Between counterfeiters of antiques and counterfeiters of money there would seem to be no great difference in caliber. Yet between some counterfeiters of money and others the exhibits in the Vienna crime museum show all the difference in the world.

Here is the greatest collection of the kind to be found anywhere. For there is something about the mixture of fine artisan skill and a laxness of morality that makes counterfeiting characteristic of Viennese crime. Here is no heavy-handed butcher-murder that made the Berlin crime museum a thing I want to forget.

Here is delicate skill that often attains artistry. Here are imagination and study and the employment of the latest discoveries in science. And yet here, too, are almost primitive attempts at counterfeiting.

In the days when smaller Austrian coins were made of a kind of pewter a peasant youth decided to make some of his own. He took a half-crown piece and kept it in the fire till it was red hot. Then he took it up with a pair of pincers and let it lie on a bit of oak till the hot metal burned its impress into the wood to the depth of half the thickness of the coin. Then heating the coin again he placed it on another bit of oak, but this time so that the reverse was burned into the wood. That made two molds.

Carefully putting the two molds so that they made one, the

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boy clamped the two pieces of wood together. Then with a bit he bored a hole through the wood until it reached the hollow formed by the two molds clamped to each other.

He melted broken tops of seltzer bottles in an iron pot. This he poured through the channel he had bored through the wood until the molten lead filled the mold. He let it harden, then he unclamped the mold. A counterfeit of the half-crown piece dropped out.

He repeated the performance until he had a collection of manufactured coins. Naturally they were crude affairs and the youth was caught the very first time he tried to pass them as legal tender.

But the same idea underlies the smallest counterfeiter's outfit in the world, I suppose, which lies next to the peasant boy's wooden mold in the glass case in the Vienna museum. This consists of two pieces of steel in place of the boy's two pieces of wood. There is the further difference that the whole mold forms a cube small enough to go into a vest pocket. Also the engraving on the steel was made with skill equal to that employed by the government's best artisans.

Here, too, is what is undoubtedly the world's oldest exhibit of counterfeiting used more than a century ago. But what makes the exhibit remarkable is not its antiquity but rather the modernity of the equipment. The gang who used it consisted of a paper maker, an engraver, a printer, and a school-teacher.

The paper maker constructed a copper basket about twelve inches square with a bottom of exceedingly fine mesh. In this mesh was woven a thread of copper that made a certain design. Then the paper maker analyzed the composition of the money bills in use in Austria at that time. This he copied, even introducing wisps of colored silk into the paper mash. The liquid was poured into this basket.

When the water drained off and the mash dried there remained the paper on which the bills would be printed. Where the copper wire was woven into the mesh bottom the design made the paper a little thinner. When held up to the light that difference in thinness of the paper showed as a "water mark" by which genuine bills were marked.

The engraver of the gang made copper plates of such fine workmanship that even to-day they look the product of a superior craftsman. The printer struck off the bills on a hand press. The school teacher used his prestige and impressive personality as distributor of the bills. They must

have had a flourishing time of it, that gang, for it was not till seventy-five years later that the counterfeiting outfit was found by accident in an old flour mill and brought to the Vienna museum.

Much more modern is the history of a handsome one-hundred-crown bill I saw in one of the cases. As the son of an engraver myself I thought the imitation perfect as to engraving and said so to Inspector Johann Rapp, the curator of the museum, who was showing me about.

He smiled.

"No wonder it is a perfect copy. The man who made it is a medical student with a passionate interest in photography. He conceived the brilliant idea of *photographing* money and using the copies as real bills. He handled his camera with such exquisite skill that the photographs, as you see, deceived you into thinking them engravings. Also, as you see, he used color photography in his method.

"He would take sensitized paper and cut it to the size of a one-hundred-krone note. Then on one side he would photograph the face of the note, colors and all. On the other side he photographed the reverse of the note. So that as far as the design goes it would be impossible to tell the false from the real.

"But he got into trouble over the paper. As you see—"

Inspector Rapp unlocked the case and took out the bill. Once I had it in my hand I saw that the texture of the paper was not that of real bills.

"The most remarkable case of misapplied skill and industry, however, is this bill," Inspector Rapp said, replacing the photograph and taking out another bill. "This is the work of a seventeen-year-old schoolboy with a perfect genius for a certain kind of fine work. See for yourself what his skill was. But you must look close to spy it."

I scrutinized the bill minutely, but it took me some time to discover how the boy had counterfeited the bill. Simply *he had copied the bill with a fine pen* and different colored inks!

There was, too, an English five-pound note with a little story to it. The Austrian who counterfeited this note had a bright idea. It is easier, he decided, to pass counterfeit bills of one country in another country than in the land where every one knew the bill as national currency. So in Austria he manufactured British five-pound notes.

The bill I saw was so excellent a piece of work that I was

not surprised to learn that the biggest bank in Vienna accepted the bill and gave good Austrian currency for it.

But in a few weeks when the British bill was sent on to England for redemption it came back to Vienna marked, "Counterfeit." The bank president thereupon also got a bright idea. If he notified the police it might stop the counterfeiter from passing more of the same bills. But it would not necessarily catch the gentleman.

Whereas if the matter was kept quiet the mouse might nibble again. So quiet was the matter kept that in a week the gentleman returned to cash more "five-pound notes" and was for some time detained as guest of the state against his desire.

In a saucer I saw a little heap of paper ash with here and there among them charred corners of money bills. I asked for its story. It proved to be what is perhaps the briefest and most convincing case that ever convicted a criminal. For some time the police of Vienna were receiving daily complaints of the circulation of clever one-hundred-krone notes. This was when an Austrian krone was worth something.

Several detectives in vain scoured the city for the trail to the distributors of these bills. Finally one of them got from the bank a package of five-hundred-krone notes and went about asking everybody to change these bills for him.

The counterfeited one-hundred-krone bill was exceedingly clever work, but the experts had found a very small flaw in the engraving and every time the detective got a one-hundred-krone note he looked closely at it. That is, he gave one eye to the task. With the other he kept a sidelong watch of the face of the person who gave him the bills.

He had accosted a prosperous looking gentleman, the very picture of solid citizenship, with his usual request that the stranger change his five-hundred-krone bill. The stranger very politely acquiesced by taking out quite a bundle of new one-hundred-krone notes and counting out five of them.

The detective gave the bill the usual scrutiny—with his other eye on the man. He saw the stranger stiffen.

"If you think these bills are not good you can give them back to me!" he said coldly, his hand out for the bills.

The detective shoved the one-hundred-krone bills into his pocket.

"I wish I had a barrelful of them," he said, apologizing. "Only I've been hearing of some bad one-hundred-krone bills

going about and one has to be careful, you know. You seem to have quite a number of them. May I see the others?"

The stranger drew back.

"What the devil do you mean?" he said with a dangerous quiet in his voice.

"I'll tell you that in the police station. Come along!"

He was a brawny man, the detective, and Viennese criminals are not nearly so ready with physical resistance to arrest as Americans are. So that the detective thought the mere command would suffice. He was entirely unprepared therefore for the kick that suddenly caught him in the pit of the stomach and dropped him to the sidewalk.

Even as he fell he saw what fleet heels the stranger had.

It so happened that no one had seen the detective drop and the stranger had a good start. But the detective with a super-human effort gained his feet and got started. He turned the corner just in time to see the man dash into a dwelling house.

The detective stumbled along after him and had just made the entrance when he heard a door slam several stories above. He forced himself up the stairs and outside of an apartment on the third floor he heard a stove door slam.

The door was locked, but the detective took out his revolver, placed it against the lock and fired three shots, shattering it. His shoulder sent the door flying open.

In the living room before a large porcelain stove stood his man, regarding him.

"May I ask to what I owe the honor of this visit?" he asked.

With his revolver covering the man to prevent his leaving, the detective made a dash for the stove. Opening the stove door he was just in time to see flames making an end to a pile of money bills.

Realizing that his whole case lay melting away before him the detective plunged his hand in and brought out a handful of burned bills and paper ash. With his seared hand clutching what he considered good evidence, he turned to the man.

"Now, march, or I'll pay you with a bit of lead for the kick and this burned hand!" he growled.

His quarry "marched" but was not very much perturbed.

"You'll have a hard time proving that I gave you those bills and that I had any other bills of the kind in the house," he said with a confident smile. "There were no witnesses, you know. And as for the bits of paper you saved from the fire, you'll have a harder time proving them anything but genuine."

"Perhaps," the detective said.

As was to be expected at the trial, the counterfeiter's lawyer made the most of the situation.

"We deny that my client had any counterfeit bills in his possession," the lawyer said. "It is for the state to prove to the contrary."

It was then that the prosecuting attorney made what seems to me the briefest and most convincing case on record. Pointing to the saucer full of paper ash and bits of paper he said only:

"If these had been genuine the man would not have burned them."

The saucer went to the crime museum and the man to prison.

The curio that seemed to me the most dramatic in history was a shriveled half an apple, that was originally cut closely in half, but was now wrinkled and dried. What was on that time-shrunk surface I could not quite make out, but I did see what looked like letters on the once-plane surface of the cut. It was so obviously a story that Inspector Rapp did not wait for me to ask for it.

"There was a farmer," he said, "in the Krems district whom people called Parsifal, partly because he kept so faithful to the woman he loved, partly because they conceived him to be the kind of 'chaste fool' Parsifal was. Michel was a man of few words, which people took to mean that he had few thoughts or emotions. His love for Christina, a neighbor's daughter, was a patient, constant emotion which, because it lacked the dramatic fervor of other swains, the girl a little despised.

"The son of another farmer, Hans Fruchter, was a young devil. He was handsome, uttery unscrupulous, clever with his tongue and only too ready to use his wits to gain what was not his and to dodge responsibility for misdeeds. In his idle moods he picked on Michel to play practical jokes on. Michel, with his slow wits, proved an easy prey to Hans.

"When, however, Hans began to court Christina, not for love of her but to see what slow-witted Michel would do, the latter became more silent than ever. He watched the courtship progress, helpless to do anything about it. Christina soon lost interest in Michel and transferred her heart to Hans.

"Michel had a bad time of it in his silent way. But so long as he thought Christina was happy in her new love he remained resigned to Hans's latest triumph over him. But once Christina was won and the savor of the conquest had

waned, Hans ruthlessly threw the girl over and left her to bear the consequences of his light love.

"One morning the girl was found dead by her own hand.

"When Michel heard this he started for Hans's house. But he found that the local police had been there before him and had taken Hans to the district jail for a theft. It was a clear case and it looked as if Hans would not be at large for a number of years. It must have seemed to Michel a long time to wait.

"For a few days later he appeared in the office of the prison warden with a basket of superb apples. Cutting one of them in half with a sharp knife, he handed one half to the clerk in charge of the prison.

"Tell me if you ever tasted a finer apple," he said, and sat down at the desk for the verdict.

"The clerk bit into his half of the cut apple. So absorbed was he in his apple that he did not see what seemed to be a slight and unpremeditated movement on the part of the farmer.

"The rubber stamp that stood in lieu of the warden's signature lay near, where the farmer's hand rested on the desk holding the half of the cut apple. When the clerk's eyes were elsewhere for an instant the farmer, apparently playing idly, pressed the face of the stamp against the freshly cut surface of the apple.

"Then he stood up suddenly. 'Well, I've got to be going! I'll leave the rest of the apples with you.'

"He hurried out of the prison and the moment he got to an unobserved spot, he took out his half of the apple. On the cut surface was a clear, fresh imprint of the warden's signature stamp. A rubber stamp will make such an imprint on any similar damp surface. But it was a negative, so to say; it read from right to left. But by carefully pressing the inked surface against another half apple he got a positive.

"Taking out a fine white card the farmer pressed the surface of the apple to the lower left hand corner. A clear and exact copy of the warden's stamp showed there. Then the farmer threw his half of the apple away, put the card back into his pocket and went home.

"He came often to the prison thereafter with such luscious gifts of fruit that he became a privileged person there. On one of his visits he managed to get a few words in private with the prisoner Hans.

"'Christine asked with her dying breath that I help you escape,' he muttered. 'So do as this note says.'

"He slipped a bit of paper into Hans's hands.

"The following Sunday was visitors' day. Michel was by now the good Samaritan of the prison, bringing baskets of fruit not only to the prison warden and keepers, but even to favored prisoners. So that it was not particularly noticed when he approached Hans's cell with a basket on his arm.

"'Dump these apples out of the basket and let me have it,' Michel said aloud when the nearest keeper had his head turned.

"Hans emptied the basket and instantly hid the contents.

"When the visitors left that afternoon there was among them a bent little peasant woman in her Sunday church dress and a heavy mourning veil over her face. The guard at the prison exit did not remember seeing her go in.

"But in her hand she held the perfectly regular permit to visit the prison and to leave it, authenticated with the warden's familiar signature stamp. So the guard let the peasant woman leave.

"That afternoon the prison alarm rang for an escaped prisoner, Hans.

"That evening the sought for prisoner stole up to Michel's house, as he had been instructed to do in a note Michel had smuggled into the prison.

"'Michel!' Hans whispered. 'I'm here.'

"From the dark house came the sound of a window cautiously opening.

"'Is that you, Hans?' Michel asked.

"'Yes, you fool! Who do you suppose? Hurry and open the door!'

"'All right, I'll hurry!'

"A shot rang out and when the smoke cleared Hans lay dead.

"Michel let him lie there and went to the prison.

"'Hans came to my house and tried to steal some clothes wherewith to escape. I shot and killed him as I would any thief.'"

Which would have cleared Michel easily, since the prison officials' sympathies were all with him. But Nemesis in the person of a little greedy hungry boy came to spoil it. The youngster, some days before, was prowling about the gutter near the prison when he spied half an apple on a heap of rubbish.

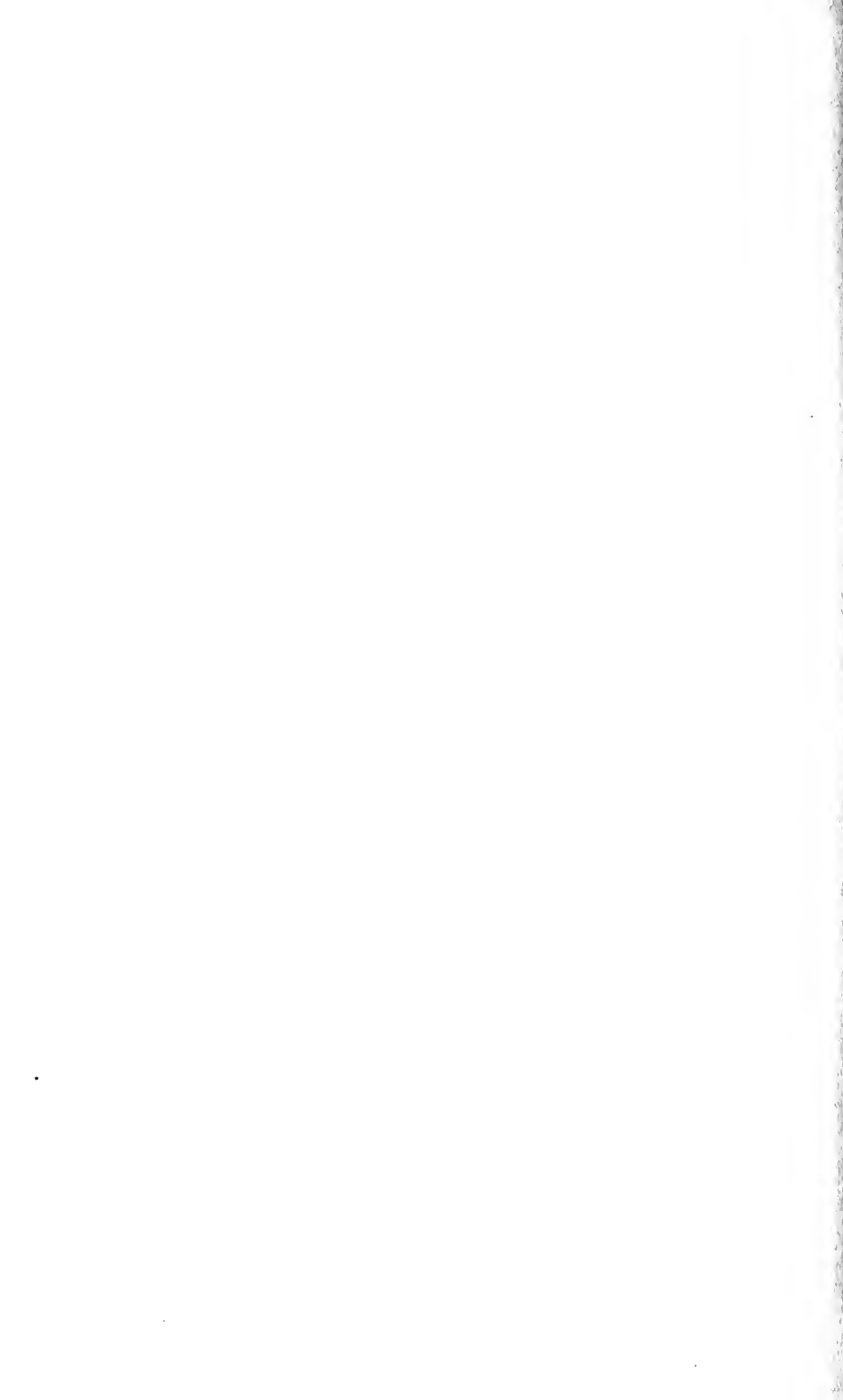
He picked it up to examine it and saw something so queer on the cut surface of the fruit that he took it to his mother

to show. The mother read the warden's signature on it, took it to him and started Michel on the way to his fate, for the clerk in the warden's office remembered who had given half of such an apple.

There are many other curios in the crime museum of the Vienna police. But I have described those which seemed to me the most characteristic. And they are the curios that somehow lingered longest in my memory as I stood on the deck of the steamer that rapidly left the shores of Europe behind me.

THE END

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